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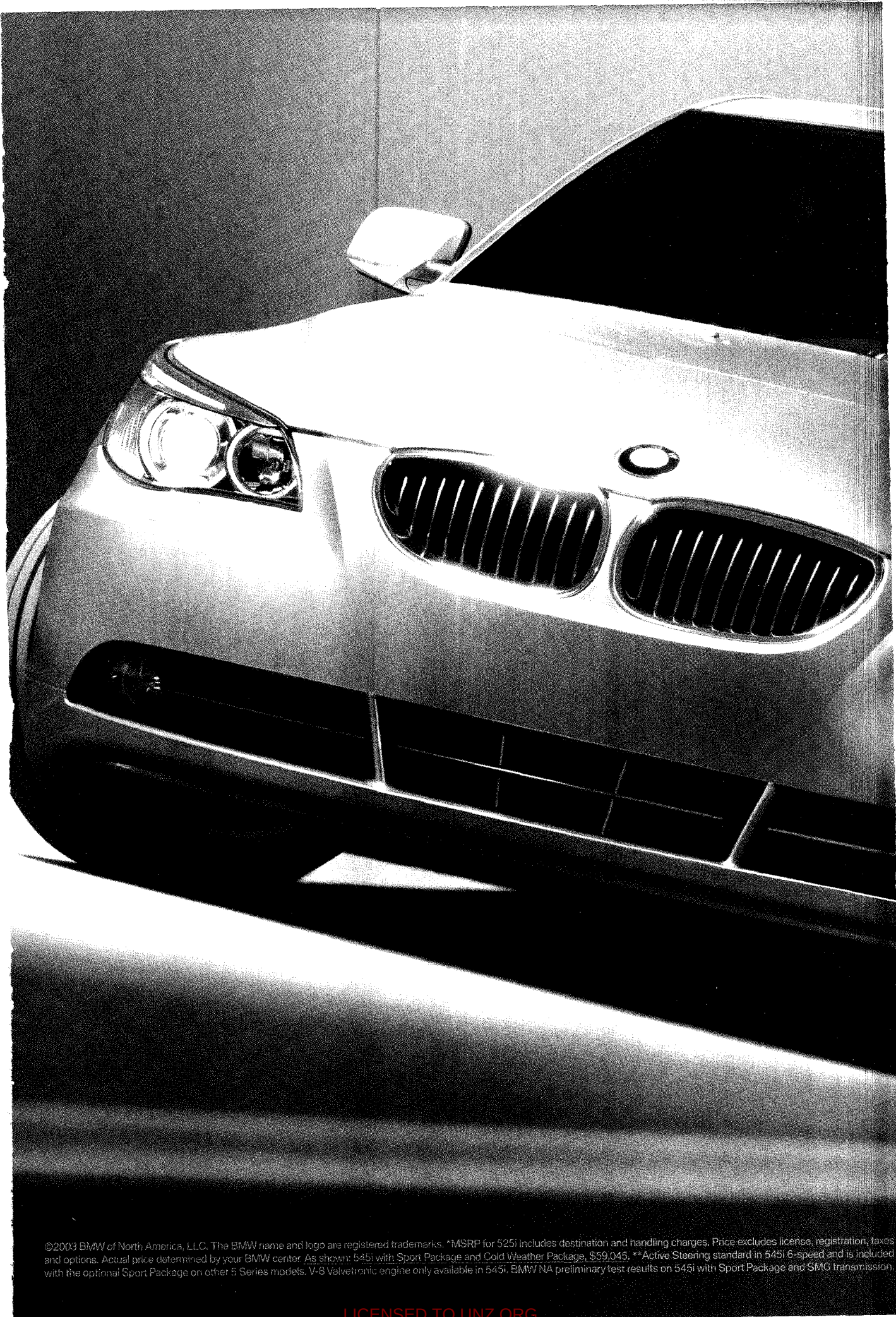
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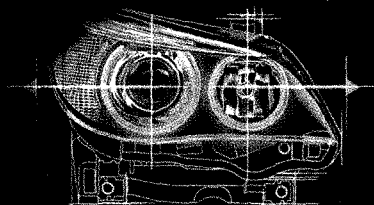
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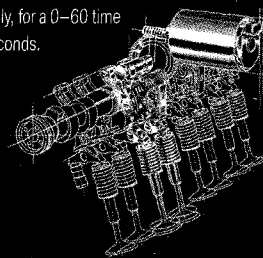
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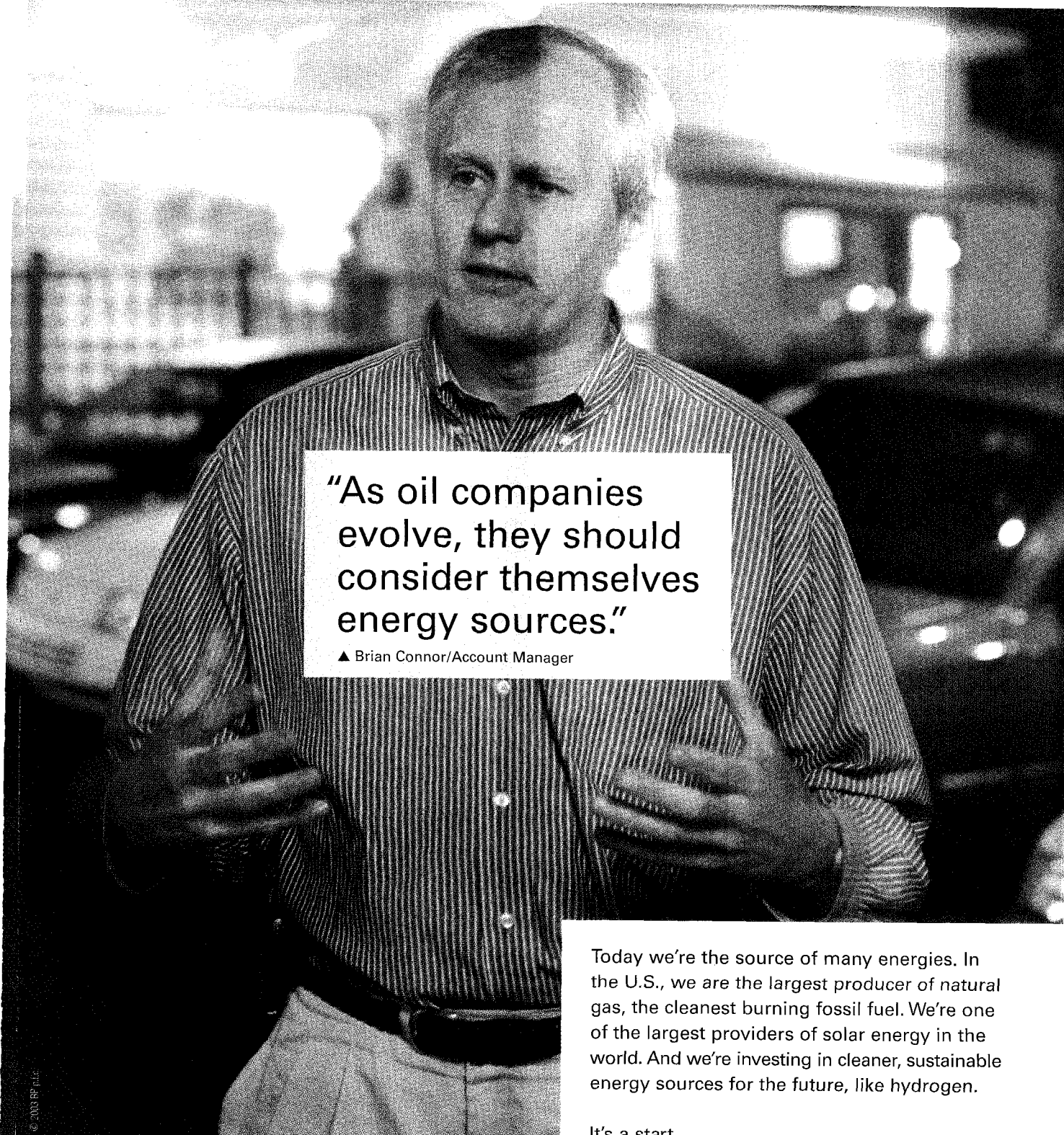
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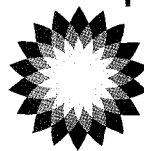
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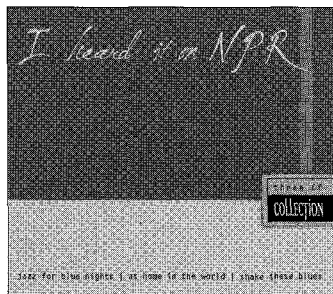
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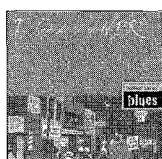
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CONTRIBUTORS

Ken Auletta ("Family Business," p. 54) has been writing about business and the media for the magazine since 1992. A collection of his pieces, "Backstory: The Business of News," is coming out in December.

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David Sedaris ("Tricked," p. 50) has published several books, including "Holidays on Ice" and "Me Talk Pretty One Day."

C. K. Williams (Poem, p. 58) is the author of nine books of poetry, including "The Vigil" and "The Singing," which will be published next month.

Robert Polidori (Photograph, p. 62) is a staff photographer. His latest book of photographs is "Zones of Exclusion: Pripyat and Chernobyl."

Jim Holt (Books, p. 84) has been contributing to the magazine since 1995.

George Packer ("Gangsta War," p. 68) is the author of "The Village of Waiting," and the editor of a book of essays, "The Fight Is for Democracy: Winning the War of Ideas in America and the World," which was published in August.

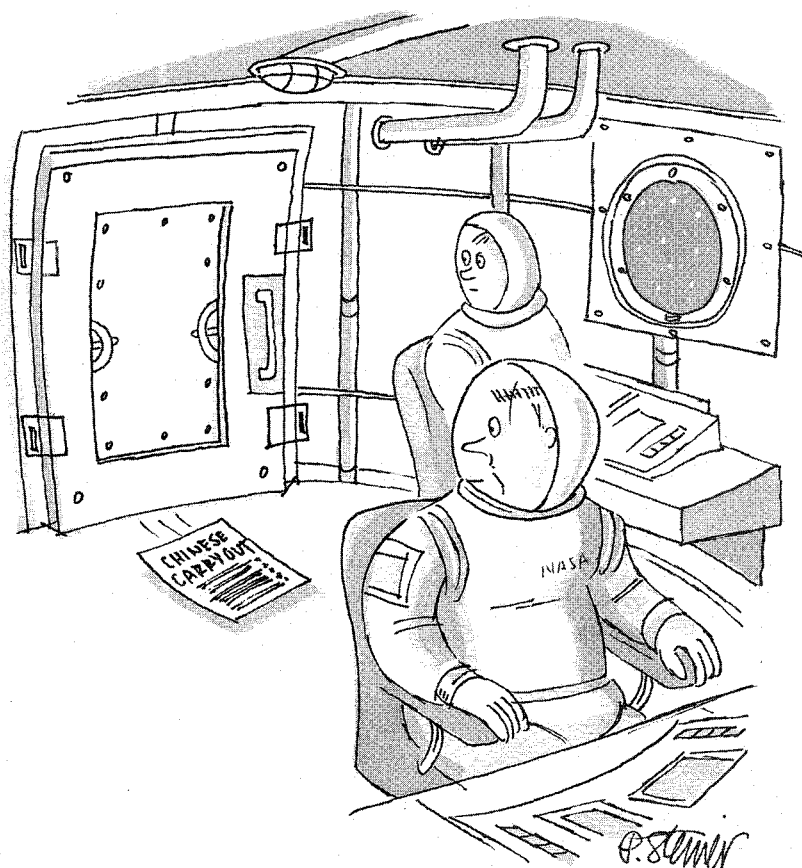
Tony Earley (Fiction, p. 78) is an associate professor of English at Vanderbilt. He has written three books, including "Jim the Boy," a novel.

Jesse Lichtenstein (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 49) is a writer living in Oregon.

John Updike (Books, p. 88) is a regular contributor. A collection of his short fiction, "The Early Stories: 1953-1975," came out this month.

John Lahr (The Theatre, p. 94) is the magazine's senior drama critic.

Ian Falconer (Cover) has just published his third children's book, "Olivia . . . and the Missing Toy." ♦



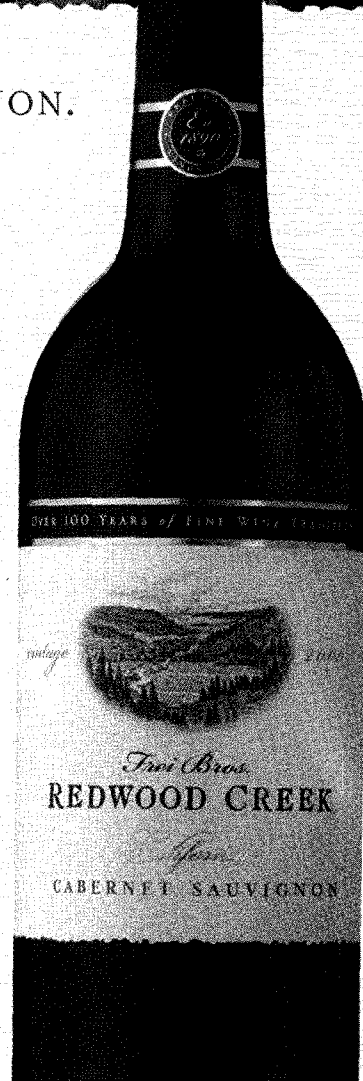
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FIND GOLD *in* 2003?



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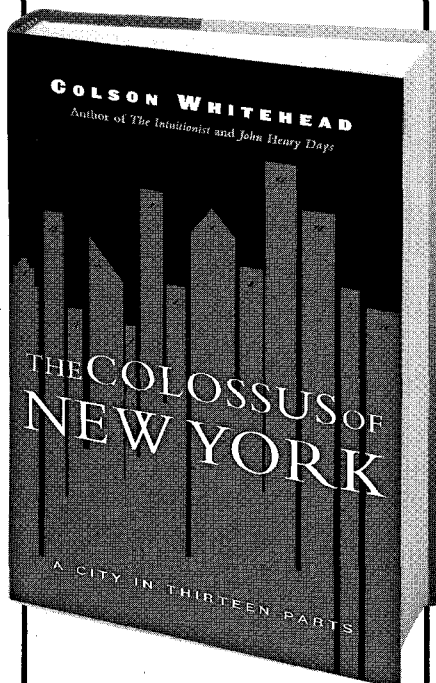
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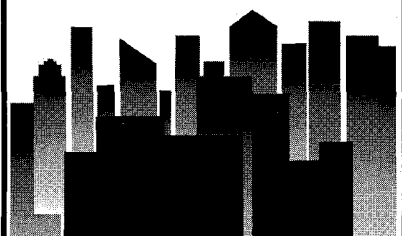


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*The New York Times
Book Review*

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THE ASSASSIN AND THE GIRL

David Denby, in his review of Quentin Tarantino's "Kill Bill—Vol.1," describes how Uma Thurman's character kills a fellow female assassin in front of the woman's little girl, who doesn't react. Denby writes, "Tarantino wants the shock of a mother killed in front of her daughter without the audience undergoing any discomfort at all" (The Current Cinema, October 13th). In fact, Tarantino is winking at another type of revenge movie, that of a child who witnesses his or her parent being killed and then grows up to avenge the death. But Tarantino finds a new way to approach this convention—something he is good at. In most revenge movies, the killer barely notices the child. Thurman's character tells the girl that she knows she'll probably grow up wanting to kill her, and that she'll be waiting.

Kate Hanley
Niskayuna, N.Y.

FUNNY, NOT DIRTY

There was a minor error in Elizabeth Kolbert's report on President Bush's visit to a Detroit Edison power plant in Michigan (The Talk of the Town, September 29th). The plant is a major emitter of ozone-forming nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide, not nitrous oxide. As Kolbert points out, it takes some suspension of logic to imagine how this Administration's systematic weakening of environmental laws, through mechanisms like the proposed Clear Skies plan, is good for the air, the water, or public health. Perhaps the emission of forty-six thousand tons of laughing gas is as good an explanation as any.

Zoe Lipman
*Program Manager, Clean the Rain
National Wildlife Federation
Ann Arbor, Mich.*

SCHWARZENEGGER'S LEGACY

Anthony Lane writes that Arnold Schwarzenegger, prior to his campaign for governor, had "campaign[ed] for noth-

ing more controversial than fitness for all" (The Talk of the Town, October 20th). In a recent election, however, Schwarzenegger was instrumental in passing one of the many ill-conceived voter-initiative propositions that have hog-tied California legislators with budgetary mandates. Proposition 49 requires that four hundred million dollars be put annually into after-school programs—a huge amount of money, considering that core school programs are routinely strapped for cash. Thanks to Schwarzenegger's support, Prop. 49 passed by a wide margin, despite pleas from teacher, parent, and education groups. As governor-elect, he will now have to face the messy reality of propositions characterized by popular ideas and horrendous implementation.

Sharon Beaulaurier
San Mateo, Calif.

THE WOMAN IN ROME

I can second Don DeLillo's sudden remembrance of the name of the movie star he and his wife saw walking in Rome, with a man on each arm, one day a couple of decades ago ("That Day in Rome," October 20th). It had to be Ursula Andress. She was living in Rome at the time with Harry Hamlin. (The two of them later made the unforgettable "Clash of the Titans" together.) I had an apartment in Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere back then, which looked down on Ristorante Sabatini, and they—Hamlin and Andress—would pull up to the eatery entrance in a Jeep and leap out, with Ursula tossing back her glorious hair. One wonders who the man on her other arm could have been the day DeLillo saw her in Via Condotti.

Dianne Herland Sloane
Woodbury, N.J.

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



THE THEATRE OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ANNA IN THE TROPICS

Nilo Cruz's Pulitzer Prize-winning play about a man who reads Tolstoy to workers in a Cuban cigar factory stars Jimmy Smits and Daphne Rubin-Vega. Directed by Emily Mann. Previews begin Nov. 4. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

BOBBY BOLAND

Farrah Fawcett stars in a comedy by Nancy Hasty about a former Miss Florida who teaches charm and deportment to young women in a small Florida town. Directed by David Esbjornson. Previews begin Nov. 4. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

BRIGHT IDEAS

In a satire by Eric Coble, pushy parents will stop at nothing to get their child into a selective preschool. Seana Kofoed and Paul Fitzgerald lead the cast. John Rando directs. In previews. (East 13th Street Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE CARETAKER

The Roundabout presents a revival of Harold Pinter's breakthrough play, from 1960, starring Patrick Stewart, Kyle MacLachlan, and Aidan Gillen. Directed by David Jones. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

CAROLINE, OR CHANGE

Tony Kushner's new musical, with music by Jeanine Tesori, is set in Louisiana in 1963 and tells the story of the friendship between a black maid and the son of the Jewish family she works for. Directed by George C. Wolfe. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

Ashley Judd, Jason Patric, and Ned Beatty star in a new production of Tennessee Williams's drama, directed by Anthony Page. In previews. Opens Nov. 2 at 6:15. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

FAME ON 42ND STREET

The movie that became a television series now becomes a musical, with a book by José Fernandez, lyrics by Jacques Levy, and music by Steve Margoshes. Directed by Drew Scott Harris and choreographed by Lars Bethke. In previews. (Little Shubert, 422 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

JACKIE MASON'S LAUGHING ROOM ONLY
He's back. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-7171.)

THE LONG CHRISTMAS RIDE HOME

A new play by Paula Vogel ("How I Learned to Drive") tells the story of three siblings who hurtle into the future after a post-Christmas-dinner

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			29	30	31	1
2	3	4				

car accident. Randy Graff and Enid Graham lead the cast. Directed by Mark Brokaw. In previews. Opens Nov. 4 at 7. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

OLDEST LIVING CONFEDERATE WIDOW TELLS ALL

Ellen Burstyn stars in an adaptation by Martin Tahse of Allan Gurganus's saga about a hundred-year-old woman's memories of her long life. Directed by Don Scardino. Previews begin Oct. 31. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

SIX DANCE LESSONS IN SIX WEEKS

Polly Bergen and Mark Hamill star in a new play by Richard Alfieri, about the friendship between a Florida retiree and the dance teacher she hires, a jaded former New Yorker. Directed by Arthur Allan Seidelman. Opens Oct. 29 at 6:30. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

TABOO

In a musical about Boy George, the performance artist Leigh Bowery, and the flamboyant London club scene of the early eighties, Euan Morton plays the pop star and George O'Dowd (a.k.a. Boy George) plays Leigh Bowery. With a book adapted for the American stage by Charles Busch and music and lyrics by O'Dowd. Directed by Christopher Renshaw and choreographed by Mark Dendy. In previews. (Plymouth, 235 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

TATJANA IN COLOR

The Culture Project presents a new play by the prolific playwright Julia Jordan, set in Vienna in 1912, about a scandal surrounding the artist Egon Schiele and a young girl who modelled for him. Directed by Will Pomerantz. One preview on Oct. 29. Opens Oct. 30 at 8. (45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

THE VIOLET HOUR

A new play by Richard Greenberg ("Take Me Out"), about a young publisher and a mysterious machine, stars Robert Sean Leonard, Jasmine Guy, Scott Foley, Dagmara Dominczyk, and Mario Cantone. Directed by Evan Yionoulis. In previews. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

WICKED

Kristin Chenoweth, Idina Menzel, Norbert Leo Butz, Carole Shelley, and Joel Grey star in a new musical by Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman, based on Gregory Maguire's novel about the witches of Oz. Directed by Joe Mantello, with

musical staging by Wayne Cilento. Two previews on Oct. 29. Opens Oct. 30 at 6:30. (Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BECKETT/ALBEE

As portrayed by the incomparable Brian Murray and Marian Seldes, the He and She of Edward Albee's 1976 one-act play "Counting the Ways" don't exactly spar, but they do jostle. They're a well-bred, upper-middle-class Punch and Judy, wielding verbal bats, who are conducting an inquiry into the human heart almost as if neither of them had one. Beckett had a significant influence on Albee's style, and after you listen to the three short pieces by Beckett that constitute the first half of the program—"Not I," "Footfalls," and "A Piece of Monologue"—it's easy to see why. Like Beckett, Albee makes language play on the listener's ear and in his imagination. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/20/03.) (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

BEYOND RECOGNITION

In a play by John Petrick about a man who survives a brutal beating in Central Park, Grant James Varjas plays the victim, Kevin, a gay, alcoholic social worker who slowly and painfully regains the knowledge of who he is. Mark, a tabloid reporter, and Andrew, Kevin's former boyfriend, provide cues that help restore his memory in stunning flashbacks. But Josh, one of Kevin's clients, played with electric menace by Michael Goduti, creates the strongest identity jolt for Kevin, reminding him of the dangers that exist outside the Park. Directed by Kate Bushmann. (Abingdon Theatre Arts Complex, 312 W. 36th St. 212-868-4444.)

BOLD GIRLS

Rona Munro's play depicts a day in the lives of four women in modern Belfast, struggling through life with absent men, too little money, and too much violence. Often wrenching, it's just as often funny. Directed by Ludovica Villar-Hauser. (29th Street Rep, 212 W. 29th St. 212-868-4444. Closes Nov. 1.)

THE BOY FROM OZ

The charming, wildly hardworking performer Hugh Jackman has been put in the awkward position of having to prove that the Australian singer-songwriter Peter Allen—who was discovered by Judy Garland and who married her daughter Liza Minnelli—is worthy of our attention. Just this side of overly hunky, Jackman is a dream of sweetness. He does everything he can to sell the show, and the girls in the audience love him. But the poorly directed production that swirls around him under-

A lost book found.

We've known forever that a picture is worth a thousand words, but we've only recently found out how a movie could rescue 300,000 of them.

In 1972, Dow Mossman published his first novel to critical acclaim. Inspired by reviews he'd read, Mark Moskowitz, at the time a student, purchased *The Stones of Summer*, but on his first attempt didn't make it very far into Mossman's epic narrative of a boy's coming of age in the American heartland. He soon forgot all about the novel and its author, who disappeared from the publishing world, never writing another book.

Twenty-five years later, Mark Moskowitz pulled his old copy of *The Stones of Summer* off the shelf and decided to give it another try. To his surprise, he found he couldn't put it down. He was enthralled by the journey of Mossman's protagonist across three decades, from 1942 through 1969, and he was astonished at the humor, honesty, and unfailing imagination of the author. So much so, in fact, that when he reached the last page, Moskowitz discovered the book wouldn't put him down. What he'd read had lifted his heart and mind out of their usual routines and set him off on his own new adventure: the making of *Stone Reader*, an award-winning film about his discovery of this extraordinary book—out

of print for more than 25 years and nearly impossible to find—and his search for its forgotten author.

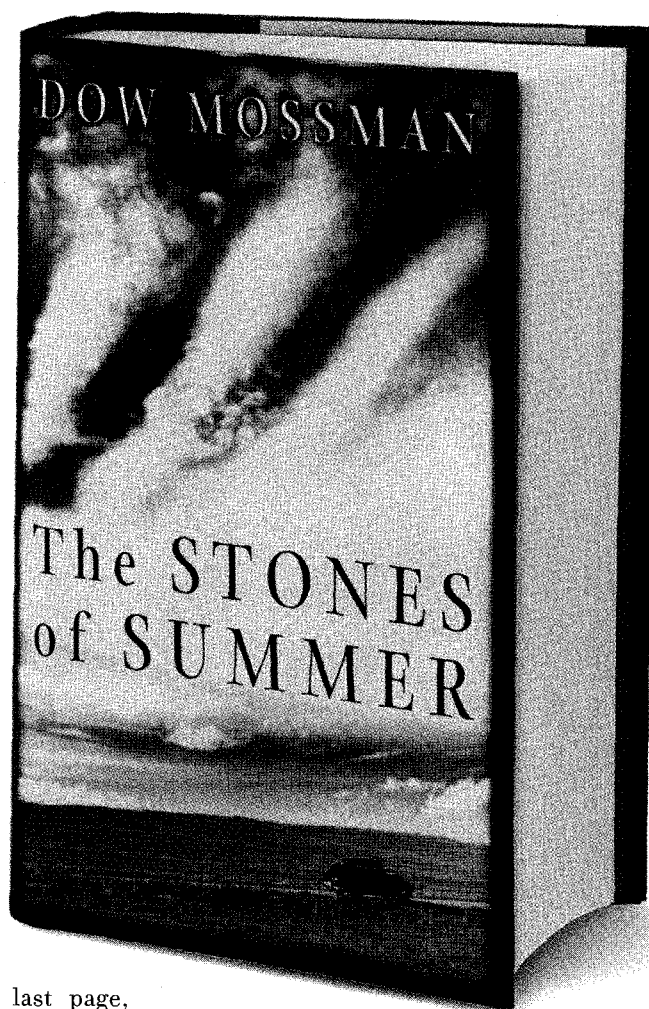
With *The Stones of Summer* just published in a new edition, Mark Moskowitz's movie now has the happiest of endings. And a new generation of readers will come to know a novel that is as brooding and ebullient, as

mystifying and as beautiful as America itself. As John Nichols, the author of *The Milagro Beanfield War*, has written, "*The Stones of Summer* is a complex, original, and passionate novel written at fever pitch, as wonderful as it is difficult, and ultimately very rewarding. Imagine Thomas Wolfe and Cormac McCarthy collaborating on a book titled *Under the Volcano/Call It Sleep*. The climax is an astonishing tour de force. *The Stones of Summer* is one of those surprising and unafraid works-of-art that breaks all the rules with manic intensity and fabulous language, leaving us breathless at its end. All hail its return!"

Barnes & Noble Books is proud to return this neglected novel to print. We believe it will prove, by its lasting impression on readers, the truth expressed by one of its characters: "Sometimes

words are the longest things there are."

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mines him. When Allen meets Judy (Isabel Keating) at a bar in the Hong Kong Hilton and coaxes her into singing "All I Wanted Was the Dream," he is, inevitably, upstaged. Keating opens her red-lipped mouth and the crowd gasps: we're in the presence of a great theatrical star impersonating a great theatrical star. She's not camp—she's Judy. Jackman has a formidable task: to play a ghost better left to Heaven. (10/27/03) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE COLLEEN BAWN

Dion Boucicault's melodrama, a tale of mismatched lovers, lost fortunes, and even a hunchback, gets a rollicking revival in the hands of director Charlotte Moore and the Irish Repertory Theatre. The play is for the most part wonderfully cast, with Laura James Flynn (as an heiress) and Colin Lane (as a magistrate everyone hates) shining in comedic roles. Moore and the set designer James Morgan have added a fun fillip by creating a set within a set, staging the play as it would have appeared in an Irish travelling show, circa 1860. With lively fiddling by James Cleveland. (132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.)

GOLDA'S BALCONY

In William Gibson's one-woman play about Golda Meir—the Russian immigrant from Wisconsin who helped create the state of Israel and eventually became its Prime Minister—Tovah Feldshuh shows how national and family passions blend in the heart, making dispassionate judgment impossible. Feldshuh demonstrates that, even if Meir gave more time to the Jewish state than to her son and daughter, she could not be said to have put the interests of Israelis above the interests of her own children; to her, they were one and the same. Scott Schwartz directs. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

GONE MISSING

The newest production by the Civilians is informed by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but it doesn't take on the big losses. Instead, it looks at everyday life—as one character says, "The world is made of little things; what's important is to remember them largely." Written by the company and smoothly directed by Steven Cosson. (Zipper's Belt, 336 W. 37th St. 212-868-4444. Closes Nov. 2.)

IRON

The characters in Rona Munro's new play have more choices than the women in her play "Bold Girls," yet their situation is more extreme: a young woman visits her mother, imprisoned for killing her father, after an absence of fifteen years. The interactions of the two women as each tries to envision all that she's missed and misunderstood form the core of this play. Munro's crystal-clear writing reveals the universal in the specific without ever seeming obvious. A powerhouse performance by Lisa Emery, as the mother, propels the drama, which is directed with a sure hand by Anna D. Shapiro. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

In a stirring revival at the Virginia, Audrey II—the murderous plant from outer space that is the star of this buoyantly macabre musical—goes airborne, shooting over the heads of the audience, green jaws clacking. Howard Ashman's vivacious, jaded book and Alan Menken's catchy score are as appealing as ever, and the cast is splendid. Directed by Jerry Zaks. (245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200.)

LIVING OUT

Lisa Loomer's stellar new play about mothers and nannies is centered on the relationship between a

go-getter entertainment lawyer, Nancy Robin (Kathryn Meisle), and Ana, her El Salvadoran "caregiver" (Nancy is too progressive to use the word "nanny"). Zilah Mendoza gives an excellent, touching performance as Ana, who must hide the fact that she has a young son at home in order to get her job. Directed by Jo Bonney. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422. Closes Nov. 2.)

THE NIGHT HERON

The female mullet gets an airing in a peculiar new play by Jez Butterworth ("Mojo") that lands a stentorian lady ex-con, Bolla (Mary McCann), in the ramshackle cottage of two down-and-outers in the Cambridge Fens—Wattmore (Chris Bauer), who is suicidally depressed, and Griffin (Clark Gregg), who is erratic and violent. It is a credit to the seven-member American cast that they make

sight of a sumptuous Manhattan dinner party, is to punch the lights out of every intellectual pose. Under the confident and precocious direction of Will Fears, "Omnium Gatherum" is full of polemicists, but it is not itself a polemic. It is, more accurately, a provocation—a show of theatrical fireworks to enlighten our darkness. (10/6/03) (Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave. 212-239-6200.)

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

Eileen Atkins, John Lithgow, and Ben Chaplin star in a new play by William Nicholson, about a man who walks out on his marriage. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

SILVER NITRATE

The Juggernaut Theatre Company presents a new play by Cathy Caplan, set in Weimar Germany, about a group of photographers who are forced out of artistic isolation and into political involvement by changing times. Directed by Gwynn MacDonald. (Blue Heron Arts Center, 123 E. 24th St. 212-868-4444.)

STRICTLY ACADEMIC

An evening of two one-acts in which A. R. Gurney fools around with the foliolar of academic preoccupations. Five-finger exercises that come across two-fingered. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 212-333-4052.)

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN

In Darko Tresnjak's audaciously directed, suspenseful production of the tragedy the Bard wrote with John Fletcher, the drama begins and ends with two weddings steeped in blood. In between come unusually sensual, homoerotic snatches of love talk, a tacit rape, death sentences, and frightening sword fights. If Arcite (David Harbour) and Palamon (Graham Hamilton)—the kinsmen of the title, estranged by their competitive passion for the Amazon Emilia (the thrilling Doan Ly)—do not stir you with their sword-play, two feet from the front row, you have no business being in a theatre. Jennifer Ikeda gives an unearthly performance as the sweet daughter of the kinsmen's jailer, who goes mad when her love for Palamon is not returned. A dark gem, brilliantly set, with dishy costumes that evoke "BeastMaster" or "Xena, Warrior Princess." (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

The pixieish Wendy Spero generates more emotion in her touching one-woman comedy show than a cast of twenty might produce. Spero's father, whom she calls Gary, died when she was nine months old, so she was raised by her mother, a Dr. Ruth-like Manhattan sex therapist, who struggled, sometimes overzealously, to assure her daughter's social and sexual well-being. With no props but a couch and a slide projector, Spero unspools the narrative of her life, from smoking a joint with her boss to finding her father's college diary. By the end of the evening, she's calling Gary "Daddy"—and the audience is low on Kleenex. (Upright Citizens Brigade, 307 W. 26th St. 212-366-9176.)

WILDER

In Erin Cressida Wilson's new "chamber musical," an old man looks back on his sexual awakening as a Depression-scarred denizen of a Colorado brothel. The evening offers plaintive Appalachian sounds, the acting of John Cul-lum, and the sensual presence of Lacey Kohl—but the piquant parts are richer than the theatrical whole. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)



Regina Carter plays Niccolò Paganini's irreplaceable 1743 violin, on loan from the city of Genoa, at Alice Tully Hall (see Night Life).

this unlikely bunch of Britons seem real, particularly Bauer, who not only speaks but moves like an Englishman who has just about given up. Directed by Neil Pepe. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200. Closes Nov. 9.)

NOBODY DON'T LIKE YOGI

Ben Gazzara stars as the legendary Yankees ball-player Yogi Berra in a new play by Thomas Lysaght. Directed by Paul Linke. (Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

OMNIUM GATHERUM

The intention of Theresa Rebeck and Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros's witty, pugnacious play, which opens to the sound of a low-flying chopper and the

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

The highlight of the company's second week is three performances of three back-to-back premieres: Robert Hill's "Dorian," based on Oscar Wilde's "The Portrait of Dorian Gray," and Jiri Kylian's "Petite Mort" and "Sechs Tänze." ♦ Oct. 29 at 7:30: "Without Words," "workwithinwork," and "Within You Without You: A Tribute to George Harrison." ♦ Oct. 30-31 at 8: "Petite Mort," "Sechs Tänze," and "Dorian." ♦ Nov. 1 at 11:30 A.M. (a family matinée): Excerpts from "Sechs Tänze," "Theme and Variations," and "Three Virgins and a Devil." ♦ Nov. 1 at 2: "Theme and Variations," "Le Grand Pas de Deux," "Three Virgins and a Devil," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Fancy Free." ♦ Nov. 1 at 8: "Diversion of Angels," "Symphonic Variations," "Pillar of Fire," and "Raymonda (Grand Pas Classique)." ♦ Nov. 2 at 2: "Theme and Variations," "Le Grand Pas de Deux," "Three Virgins and a Devil," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Fancy Free." ♦ Nov. 2 at 7:30: "Petite Mort," "Sechs Tänze," and "Dorian." ♦ Nov. 4 at 7:30: "Without Words," "workwithinwork," and "Within You Without You: A Tribute to George Harrison." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Through Nov. 9.)

NIKOLAIS DANCE THEATRE

Alwin Nikolais didn't merely choreograph his works. He placed equal importance on designing the sets, the costumes, and the lighting and on composing most of the scores. For him, it was all part of the same game: putting shapes and colors in motion, with music. Because his art was more about production than performance, it's relatively easy to reproduce, as Utah's Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company is now attempting, ten years after his death. The program, selected by Nikolais's longtime collaborator, Murray Louis, spans four decades and features "Noumenon Mobilis" (1953), in which performers stretch within an elastic fabric sheath, and "Crucible" (1985), in which truncated hands, torsos, and legs and their vertical reflections trace the evolution of shadow-puppet beasts. In contrast with these hallucinatory visions, "Blank on Blank" (1987), a late experiment without color or theatrical devices, is a letdown. It lacks the sense of wide-eyed wonder that is at once the best and the worst feature of Nikolais's work. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Oct. 28-Nov. 2 at 8.)

"REST STOP RENDEZVOUS"

Without the explicit humor or violence that often accompanies the landscape of American desert highways in literature and film, Jordan Fuchs and the five other members of his company convey the changing weather, terrain, and moods of long road trips. Framed by projected slide images of empty highway, shifting pairs of dancers whizz by like road signs from a passing car, or meet, linger for more personal exchanges, and part. Andy Russ provides an atmospheric score of rain and slapping windshield wipers. (Danspace Project at St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Oct. 30-Nov. 1 at 8:30 and Nov. 2 at 7:30.)

"MOVE TO EXIT"

When Kinetic Dance Theatre labels its new production a "Brechtian deconstruction of the dying process," they mean Brechtian in the Bob Fosse, "Cabaret" sense. Two women in black unitards and character shoes, guided by a mistress of ceremonies, lead a goofy Everyman through musical numbers, all bowlers and jazz hands, depicting the Kübler-Ross stages (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance). The abrupt shifts between casual violence and expert razzmatazz can't sustain the requisite chill, and the Brechtian devices are undermined by a cloying sentimentality and a bathetic finale in which the confirmation of an afterlife is found in an Elton John song. (Kraine Theatre, 85 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444. Nov. 2 at 2 and 8. Through Nov. 23.)

"BLACK BURLESQUE (REVISITED)"

A hybrid performance by Reggie Wilson's Fist & Heel Performance Group, Zimbabwe's Black Umfolosi a-cappella group, and Trinidad and Tobago's Noble Douglas Dance Company has a sec-

ond week at Dance Theatre Workshop. (219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Oct. 29-Nov. 1 at 7.)

"SUNDAYS AT THREE"

In 1955, when Anna Sokolow's "Rooms" premiered at the 92nd Street Y, it shocked audiences with its jazz score and anomie. A half-century later, as Players' Project, the late choreographer's ensemble, inaugurates the Y's annual "Sundays at Three" series, "Rooms" is more likely to provoke nostalgia than outrage. But it's still potent, exuding a what's-old-is-new-again freshness, heightened by the live accompaniment of the French wind quintet Le Concert Impromptu. With Sokolow's "Kaddish" (1946) and "Four Songs" (1994). (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Nov. 2 at 3.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA

In his ongoing quest for integrity, the artistic director Martin Santangelo has forgone many things: elaborate sets, merely technical displays of virtuosity, and now, male dancers. "Women tend to be more honest," he says. Thus, for the tenth-anniversary performances of his Madrid-based company, the six musicians are male, but the three dancers are all women, one of them Santangelo's wife, the extraordinary Soledad Barrio. Her dancing exemplifies the authenticity, ardor, and depth of the troupe's pared-down aesthetic. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-239-6200. Oct. 30 at 8 and Nov. 1-2 at 3 and 8. Through Nov. 30.)

"LEAVE YOURSELF AT THE DOOR, PLEASE"

Regina Nejman and her four maenads, wearing bustiers, half-slips, and radioactive-red Lulu wigs, create a fiendishly energetic postfeminist dance, backgrounded by Mio Morales's ambient Brazilian techno. Mixing synchronized group work with breakaway interactive cameos, the women manhandle each other in fluid vignettes that obliquely address women's position in the workplace. Instead of attacking a glass ceiling, the dancers hurl their bodies at the floor, and at each other, like missiles, rebounding from the impact. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. Oct. 30-Nov. 2 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

THE STROKES

Finally delivering "Room on Fire," the follow-up to their much ballyhooed debut album, the well-heeled but stylishly bedraggled locals try to dispel accusations of one-trick-ponyism. Will the album extend their buzz, or merely recall a time when skinny ties were a bold sartorial statement? With the Kings of Leon, the Tennessee band that the British press dubbed the "Southern Strokes." (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 212-307-7171. Oct. 29-30 at 8.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE

Oct. 30 at 8: The six-member ensemble Limbrant performs Flemish folk music from Belgium. (Thalia Theatre, Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St.) Nov. 1 at 8: A rare appearance by the Indian sarangi master Ram Narayan. (Symphony Space.) Nov. 2 at 7: An evening of Sardinian music with the male vocal group Tenores di Oniferi and Roberto Corona and Stefano Pinna on the *launed-das*, an ancient reed instrument that sounds like the bagpipe. (Symphony Space.) (For more information about all shows, call 212-545-7536.)

WEEN

This flippant alternative-rock duo, rich with scatological humor and musical cross-pollination, is the unluckiest of success stories. Having started its somewhat perverse musical career on a whim, the band, which recently released its eighth album, remains a unique cult phenomenon. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 212-307-7171. Nov. 1 at 6:45.)

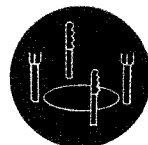
SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK

The a-cappella ensemble celebrates its thirtieth anniversary. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Nov. 1 at 8.)

TIGER LILLIES

The wonderfully sordid London trio (accordion, bass, and drums) stops by for a one-night stand. (St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Brooklyn. 718-858-2424. Nov. 1 at 8.)

TABLES FOR TWO



ROBERT'S STEAKHOUSE

603 W. 45th St. (212-245-0002)—"Come see our harem rooms," the manager urged two couples sipping espresso at Robert's, the forty-two-seat restaurant on the mezzanine level of *Penthouse's* Executive Club, a ten-thousand-square-foot strip club at the "zenith of luxury entertainment." He pointed beyond the sunken bar a few feet away, where half a dozen men and as many blondes in G-strings were engaged in lap dances, to a silk curtain behind which patrons could enjoy greater privacy. "Here you have beautiful women, beautiful décor, beautiful food. Here you have the best of all worlds."

The club, an Art Deco monolith near the West Side Highway, opened in June, with a surprisingly creditable steakhouse (apparently not named for the publisher of *Penthouse*, Bob Guccione, Sr.). The chef Adam Perry Lang—a veteran of Le Cirque, Daniel, and Chanterelle—serves a menu with a calculated emphasis on meat and game (although the iceberg salad comes beautifully dressed, with lemon, olive oil, and blue cheese). Lang sends out lychee sorbet to prepare the palate for his pièces de résistance: venison loin topped with smoked bacon, dense filet mignon, and superb New York strip steaks, aged on the premises. The meat dishes come with a hefty wooden-handled knife, fit for Ivanhoe.

Although you can see the dancers (or, as the Club owners prefer to say, the entertainers) below and reflected in the iridescent ceiling above, within the snug restaurant itself the appointments are refined: linen tablecloths, monogrammed plates, well-upholstered chairs. Yet, for all Lang's care, Robert's may not be the ideal spot for a romantic double date. (She: "The portobello is delicious. Try some." He: "Look. A couple just went behind the curtain.") Throughout the dinner, the waiter continually refilled the water glasses from a giant silver pitcher shaped like a tiger. The water poured from the tiger's mouth. The men never noticed. (Open Mondays through Saturdays for dinner. Entrées \$35-\$60.)

—Liesl Schillinger

CESARIA EVORA

A breath of sweet tropical air from São Vicente (a tiny port island off the coast of Senegal), Evora is known as the Barefoot Diva, a reference both to her performance style and to the earthy, laid-back feel of *morna*, the dreamy bossa-nova blues she sings with such passion. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 212-307-7171. Nov. 1 at 9:15.)

REGINA CARTER

On her latest album, "Paganini: After a Dream," this violinist made history by being both the first jazz musician and the first African-American to record with the classical master's own eighteenth-century instrument. That priceless treasure makes a rare trip out of Italy and will be in her hands here as she takes it on rhythmic and tonal excursions undreamed of by its famous owner. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Nov. 3 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL

237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Oct. 29: More renowned for their psycho-vaudevilian onstage antics than for their shambolic punk rock, the local early-nineties holdovers the Voluptuous Horror of Karen

Black are a perfect act for the Halloween season. Nightmarish burlesque meets high-volume guitars and a disquieting amount of body paint as the group brings to life the horror in its name. Oct. 31-Nov. 1: The **Wailers** are the Jamaican reggae outfit that once backed the music's greatest ambassador, Bob Marley.

BOTTOM LINE

15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (212-228-6300)—Oct. 31: **Robyn Hitchcock**. The beloved eccentric alternative-rock veteran, best known for fusing the jangly folk rock of the Byrds with the surrealist wit of Syd Barrett, offers a night of twisted wordplay and fine guitar work from his latest album, the solo acoustic effort "Luxor."

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Nov. 1: Pairing the fabled garage rock of their home town with a wry sense of humor and a stubborn fascination with disco, Detroit's endearing **Electric Six** continue their campaign to annex the dance floor. With **Junior Senior**, a pair of mirror-ball-crazed Danes. Nov. 2: **Kid Koala** is Eric San, a brilliant twenty-eight-year-old classically trained pianist turned turntablist from Canada. His imagination is as big as his native land: his latest CD, "Some of

My Best Friends Are DJs," comes with a comic book and cutouts for a portable chess set. In the Kid's hands, a pair of turntables become a bizarre radio receiver. His mostly funky music is full of animal-kingdom recordings, Dixieland jazz passages, and snippets of conversation ("Shake loose; don't be silly; you can dance" is a favorite), to name just three identifiable components.

FEZ

380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—Oct. 31: **Maison du Chic**, the self-described "Nu Wave Kabaret" hosted by NickLcat (one-half of the electro duo Plantains), throws an avant-garde costume party, with the proudly sleazy Amsterdam drum-and-organ duo **zZZ**, the lo-fi art-rockers **Anna Oxygen**, the moody Olympia, Washington, chanteuse **the Blow**, and others. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday.

IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Oct. 31-Nov. 1: The instrumental electronica-funk and self-proclaimed "space porn" band **Particle**. On Halloween the group plans to turn the inside of Irving Plaza into a tribute to Studio 54, complete with the moon with a spoon. You've been warned.

WHOLE IN ONE

Solo shows with multiple personalities are on the city's stages this fall.

By and large, one-man shows are either historical channellings ("Mark Twain Live!," "Tru") or autobiographical monologues (the work of Spalding Gray, who has a new piece, "Life Interrupted," currently in workshop). But at the moment single performers are delivering a wider variety of points of view.

This summer, Jefferson Mays played a cross-dressing antiquarian, an American journalist, a bullying husband, a black marketeer, a gay club kid, and a Nazi—all in one show, "I Am My Own Wife," which was written by Doug Wright (the author of "Quills") and jumps to Broadway this month. It joins an adaptation of Allan Gurganus's "Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All," in which Ellen Burstyn plays a nursing-home-bound centenarian who brings twenty-five characters to life; "Sexaholix ... A Love Story," in which John Leguizamo revives his lusty family tell-all; and "Lypsinka: As I Lay Lip-Synching," John Epperson's glamour-puss drag act, currently in an open run at the Minetta Lane.

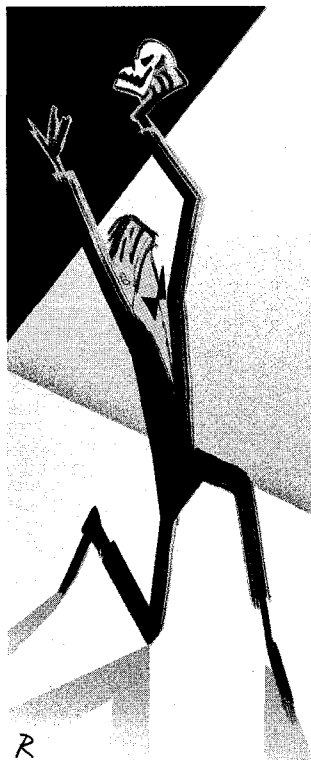
Elissa Lash, the artistic director of the

Double Helix Theatre Company, whose One Festival solo series opens later this month (as does the first New York Solo Play Festival) credits the one-person trend to "the unique theatricality of the

form and the bond a single performer builds with the audience." In the festival, the Jackie O. look-alike Andrea Reese honors her muse in "Cirque Jacqueline." Elsewhere, Tovah Feldshuh gives her unromanticized portrayal of the indomitable Golda Meir in "Golda's Balcony" (on Broadway), Ben Gazzara plays the great Yankees catcher and unwitting aphorist Yogi Berra in "Nobody Don't Like Yogi" (Off Broadway), and Wendy Spero performs her wise-cracking and sometimes heartbreaking monologue about the father she never knew, "Who's Your Daddy?" (Off-Off Broadway). Maybe the

lure of the one-man show does lie in the bond with the audience, but there is another compelling reason for its popularity—when there's only a single performer onstage, a producer has to write only one check.

—Liesl Schillinger



Nov. 3: The indefatigable Teutonic industrial ensemble **KMFDM** (short for *Kein Mitleid für die Mehrheit*, or "No Pity for the Majority").

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Oct. 31: Largely missing in action since the dawn of the nineties, the quirky New Wave favorite and Thomas Dolby protégée **Lene Lovich** steps out of the past.

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—Nov. 1: Thanks to the plaintive growl of the lead vocalist, Hamilton Leithauser, the velveteen lushness of the organist, Walter Martin, and a stylishly dishevelled production aesthetic, the **Walkmen** have already eclipsed the buzz of their core members' previous outfit, Jonathan Fire*Eater.

MERCURY LOUNGE

217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Oct. 28: Fresh from performing in London, the downtown Manhattan quartet **Shelby** breaks out ambitious new songs from its forthcoming guitar-and-violin-fuelled record, "The Luxury of Time." Nov. 1: **British Sea Power** share a taste for dramatics with their label ancestor the Smiths. The band's tight, focussed rock contrasts with its baroque, willfully ornamented stage performances, in which flora and fauna play a large role.

NORTHSIX

66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—Oct. 29: **Black Sheep**, the rapping duo who have yet to match the heights of their hilarious 1991 debut album, "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing." Oct. 31: The **Rachel's**, the instrumental post-rock collective from Louisville, Kentucky. With the chamber pop of **Matt Pond PA**. Nov. 1: **Enon**, a madcap outfit that bridges the gap between clever indie rock and experimental noise.

TONIC

107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—Oct. 31: The multilingual Brooklyn ensemble **Barbez** and the elegantly gritty instrumental trio **Big Lazy**.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BARBÈS

376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—Oct. 30: One of New York's best-kept secrets, **People Like Us** harbor the wit and warmth of Joel Forrester's piano work and compositions, Claire Daly's lustrous baritone sax, and the kind of convivial small-group interplay last heard from Thelonious Monk's quartets.

BIRDLAND

315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Oct. 29-Nov. 1: The **John Pizzarelli** trio. Pizzarelli is an exceedingly talented singer, guitarist, and bandleader; he and his sidemen, the pianist **Ray Kennedy** and the bassist **Martin Pizzarelli**, adore the American Songbook repertoire and pre-bop verities. Even without a drummer in sight, this threesome will have no problem swinging all night long. Dining.

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through Nov. 2: Consistency could be his middle name, but the bassist **Ron Carter** is having a particularly on year; his recent albums "The Golden Striker" and "Entre Amigos" (with the singer **Rossa Passos**) are among his premier sessions as a leader. Sharing the bill on Nov. 1-2 is the vibrant jazz vocalist **Carla Cook**.

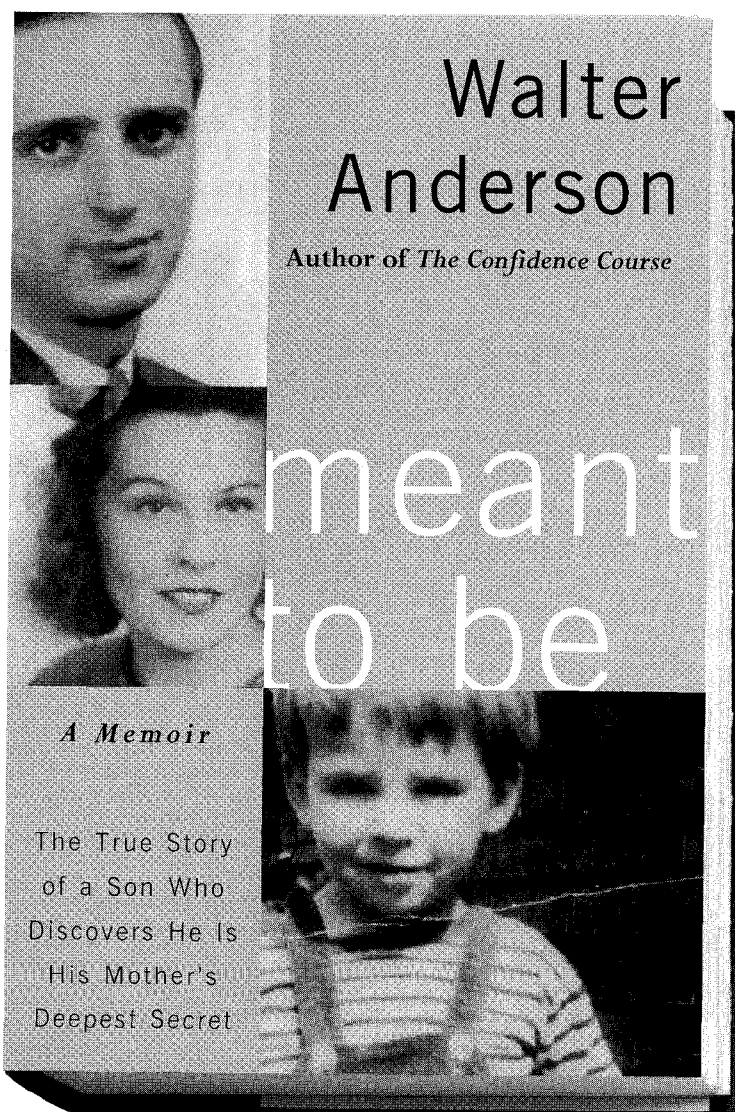
CARLYLE HOTEL

Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The **Café Carlyle**, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wrap-around murals, and **Bobby Short**.

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY

540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Through Nov. 8: By now, **Betty Buckley**, she of the big, unabashed voice and even bigger emotions, must be thoroughly tired of being stamped as the "Memory" kitty, but that's the price of having a signature song. Her repertoire actually ranges wider than that of most cabaret divas, dipping into material not only by Sondheim and the like but also by Joni Mitchell, Sting, and Bob Seger.

The True Story of a Son Who Discovers He is His Mother's Deepest Secret



Anderson chronicles his journey to success in this moving story of abuse, survival, and self-discovery.

"A marvelous book that will linger in our memory. Only a man truly at peace with himself could write with such rigorous honesty." —Bill Bradley

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N A T I O N A L B E S T S E L L E R

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The Confidence Course in paperback from Perennial

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Through Nov. 2: The grand old men of smooth jazz, the **Yellow Jackets** have been ruffling few feathers since 1981. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator Les Paul.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Through Nov. 2: Hank Mobley, known as "the middleweight champion," was an uncommonly subtle tenor saxophonist whose serene tone shunned the girth and grit of his hard-bop peers. Mobley, who died in 1986, was also a much esteemed composer, and his tunes, including "This I Dig of You," will make up much of the repertoire of this tribute, which was organized by the trumpeter and arranger Don Sickler. Guest tenorists include **Houston Person** (Oct. 28), **Frank Wess** (Oct. 29), **Joe Lovano** (Oct. 30), **Seamus Blake** (Nov. 1), and **Eric Alexander** (Nov. 2). Dining.

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Smart contemporary cabaret artists know that a world of fine tunes exists just beyond the Great American Songbook. Case in point: **Judy Kuhn** (here Mondays in November), a Broadway mainstay whose show "Finding Home" astutely sets songs by Tom Waits and Adam Guettel off material by the likes of Harold Arlen and Kurt Weill.

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Nov. 2: An uncommonly lyrical pianist who also likes to occasionally shake things up (consider last year's album, the left-of-the-jazz-center "Largo"), **Brad Mehldau** has also established a telepathic rapport with his rhythm section: the drummer **Jorge Rossy** and the bassist **Larry Grenadier**. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—The tremendous El Greco retrospective celebrates art history's No. 1 troublemaker, the Cretan icon painter who got sophisticated in Venice and Rome and then, settling in Toledo in 1576, hit his stride as a pictorial mystic and rhapsode of the Counter-Reformation. His absolute originality—or weirdness, if you prefer—inspired Picasso and Pollock and still feels rawly new. The show emphasizes El Greco's more conventional, first-rate portraiture, but his vertiginous incarnations of ecclesiastical dogma are the main event. Their pictorial method (ascending figures elongate like blobs in a Lava lamp) suggests upside-down gravity. Through Jan. 11. ♦ When the French diorama artist Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre invented a way to make one-of-a-kind photographs on silver-plated copper, the rage for daguerreotypes became so intense that five and a half tons of silver were used by Parisian platemarkers in a single year. (The mania ended with the invention of photographic paper, in the mid-eighteen-fifties.) "The Dawn of Photography: French Daguerreotypes, 1839-1855," an exhaustive and, at times, exhausting show, features a hundred and seventy-five works, from still-lives to street scenes to portraits of well-known figures like Eugène Dela-

croix (looking maniacal) and Victor Hugo (looking crabby). Near the end of the show, a selection of female nudes is followed by a dog, a bull, a horse, and a prosthetic limb, as if to say that all subjects are equal before the camera's neutral gaze. Through Jan. 4. ♦ "Dreams of Yellow Mountain: Landscapes of Survival in Seventeenth-Century China." Through Jan. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)

33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—Liam Gillick's wall painted with intertwining bands of ochre, brown, and orange transforms the museum's entrance into a cross be-

rent effect of modernity: the rolling blind spot of the recent past. Bigger, slicker later paintings succumb to mere razzmatazz. But Rosenquist earns blanket forgiveness on the strength of his classic "F-111" (1964-65), a multi-panelled wraparound work, eighty-six feet long, that distills the madnesses of the nineteen-sixties with supple, violent majesty. Some people deem it the Great American Painting. Others have yet to look at it sufficiently. Through Jan. 25. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—At the end of Lothar Baumgarten's film "The Origin of the

Night," which seems to present ninety-eight minutes of the jungle in semi-darkness, a legend (in German) appears on the screen: "Shot in the forests of the Rhine, 1973-77." It isn't a surprise, exactly. The trancelike piece is filled with rippling waters, heavy green vines, and mighty trees, with a soundtrack of ambient chirps and croaks. But viewers also see dead rubber tires and discarded scraps of plastic interrupting the apparent rain-forest lushness; at one point airplanes go overhead. Baumgarten composed a faux Amazon in his own polluted back yard, turning an abjectly familiar vista exotic. Through Nov. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

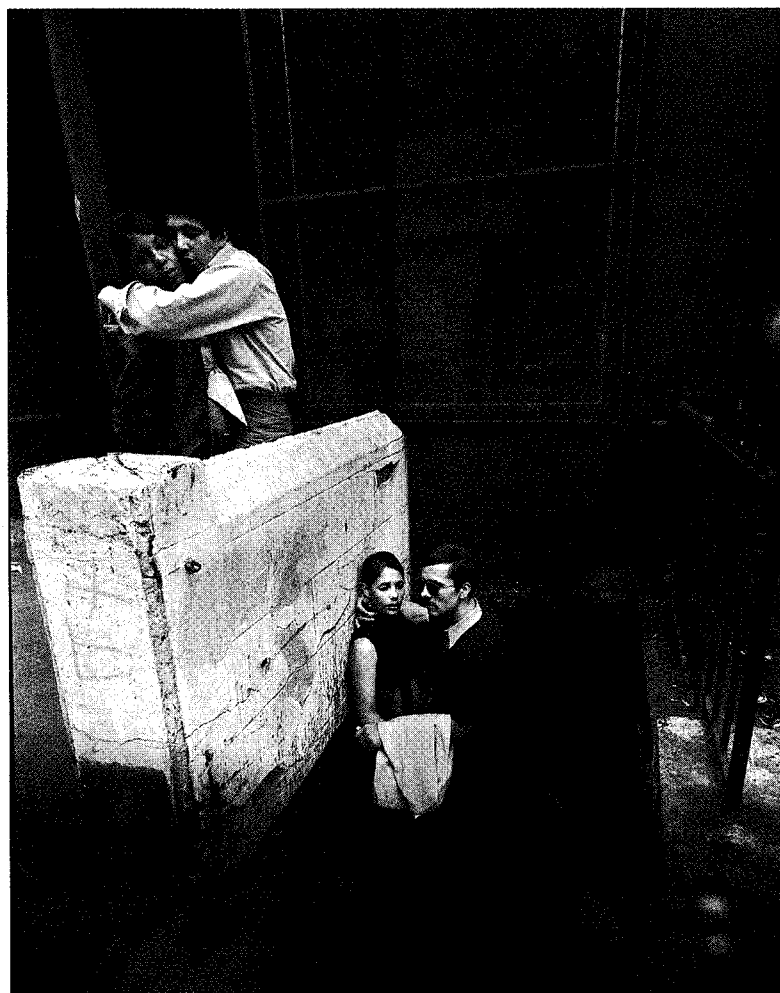
BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"About Time: 700 Years of European Painting," which has been permanently installed, primarily in the museum's Beaux Arts court, includes a vast range of works, from fourteenth-century devotional panels to a Picasso portrait of Dora Maar, although the emphasis of the collection is on the Fauves and the Impressionists. Works are grouped under rubrics: genre studies, figure studies, landscapes, and something they call "narrative strategies," in which they include an eighteenth-century Bolivian painting, "The Carpenter's Shop in Nazareth," depicting industrious angels wielding a cross-cut saw. The point of the show—offering an art-

historical primer—fits with the museum's educational mission. But the quickie summation of seven centuries' worth of art blurs some of the distinctions that it introduces. ♦ Contemporary Murrano Jews in Portugal celebrating holidays in hiding; Argentinean mothers of the disappeared; Purim masqueraders in China and Africa; large family groups from Ethiopia, Yemen, India, Venezuela, and Hong Kong; denizens of Birobidzhan, the Jewish Autonomous Region, established by Stalin in 1934; Jewish hawkers of Catholic souvenirs outside St. Peter's, where hereditary licenses go back to the eighteenth century; female rabbinical students in New York City; boys from the Hebrew Academy of Las Vegas—the Diaspora includes them all, and "The Jewish Journey: Frédéric Brenner's Photographic Odyssey" presents their portraits in crisply documentary black-and-white. Through Jan. 11. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION

1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—"The Drawings of François Boucher." His coy maidens, muscular youths, allegorical grandes dames, and apple-



"East 100th St., 1966," by Bruce Davidson, at Greenberg (see Photography).

tween a Scandinavian design center and a corporate lobby. The image suggests a magnified diagram of fibre-optic cable, which is fitting, since the project was originally conceived for a Norwegian telecommunications company. Near the ticket counter, a painted aluminum cube is suspended from the ceiling, lined with text from B. F. Skinner's "Walden Two." If the connection between the two works seems tangential, that's the point: distraction and diversion are central to Gillick's project, which sneaks his complex and subversive theories of post-utopian social space (you can find his articulate explanation of this in a museum brochure) into objects that have the polish and appeal of mass-produced design. Through Dec. 1. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—"James Rosenquist" is a pinball machine of a retrospective, gracing the museum's ramp with two-dimensional equivalents of rackety lights and bumpers. The early Pop work, which uses billboard-painting technique to create surrealistic montages of slightly outdated magazine imagery, feels immortal. It nails a recur-

cheeked putti helped François Boucher (1703-70) win the Prix de Rome at age nineteen. He followed that success with sinecures as the protégé of Madame de Pompadour and as the *premier peintre du roi*. It's tempting to disparage his rococo fripperies, but his drawings—seventy-five of which are on view to mark the tricentennial of his birth—are so delicious that the wiser course is to enjoy them. Except for a few porcelainlike portraits in colored pastel, the works are all ink-and-wash or chalk, which puts the emphasis where it should be: on Boucher's sprightly, voluptuous line and his mastery of the suggestive turn of a neck, wrist, or hip. Through Dec. 14. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Friday evenings until 9; and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—Tim Noble and Sue Webster, a shtick-happy pair of British artists, go Dumpster-diving in the name of art, arranging piles of salvaged trash so that they cast shadows of the artists in silhouette when backlit. The results suggest a cross between the laborious objects of Tom Friedman and the living sculptures of Gilbert and George, with the finesse of neither. Two of these installations are on view in this sparse survey, along with a pair of Vegas-worthy signs (one spells out "Forever," the other flashes "\$") and a life-size sculpture portraying the artists as a couple of naked primates. Or, more accurately, cheeky monkeys. Through Dec. 29. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

GLENN KAINO

Behind a pocket magnifying glass set on a plinth, before a postcard backdrop of an industrial alleyway, a tiny origami crane flaps its wings and seems to fly in place. The mechanism is disarmingly simple—the white paper creature is attached by a string to a small motor—and the effect charms. Alas, Kaino didn't know when to stop. The string continues through a hole in the wall, connecting to a further installation as large and clunky as the crane is delicate. For reasons that remain unclear, the assemblage involves giant dentures, an inflatable swimming pool, water, AstroTurf, and a stuffed jackalope (that is, a rabbit sporting antelope horns). Through Nov. 1. (The Project, 37 W. 57th St. 212-688-4673.)

Short List

JANET MALCOLM

Bookstein, 50 E. 78th St. 212-439-9605. Through Nov. 26.

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

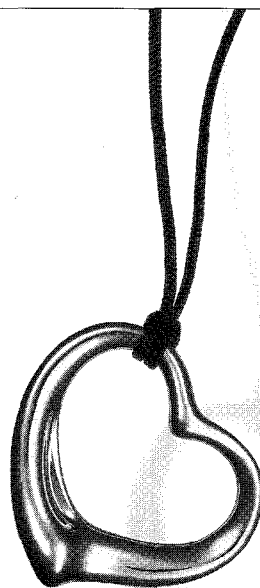
MARK INNERST

Small, lustrous new paintings by this poetic realist go beyond retro. Views of Manhattan streets and of beaches and an amusement park in New Jersey suggest history in reverse, arriving at a genteel variant of Impressionism—think of the seaside painter Eugene Boudin—with trace memories of abstraction, Cubism, and Symbolism. The Port Authority Bus Terminal looms alarmingly, as if in the reverie of a nervous nineteenth-century aesthete. Innerst's conceit is brittle, but his execution is flawless. At this show, to look is to dream. Through Nov. 8. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave. 212-563-4474.)

JESSICA STOCKHOLDER

Stockholder's twenty floor and wall assemblages stand alongside works by thirty-nine fellow-artists—Mel Bochner, Pipilotti Rist, et al. Her new floor pieces make use of common objects of all sorts, found and handmade, plain and paint-smeared, which she places on and around tables,

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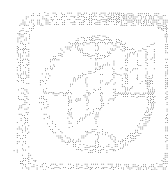
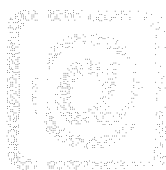
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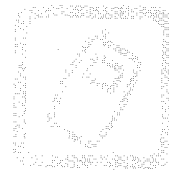
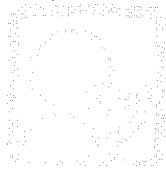
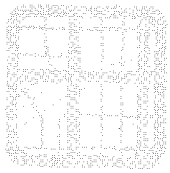


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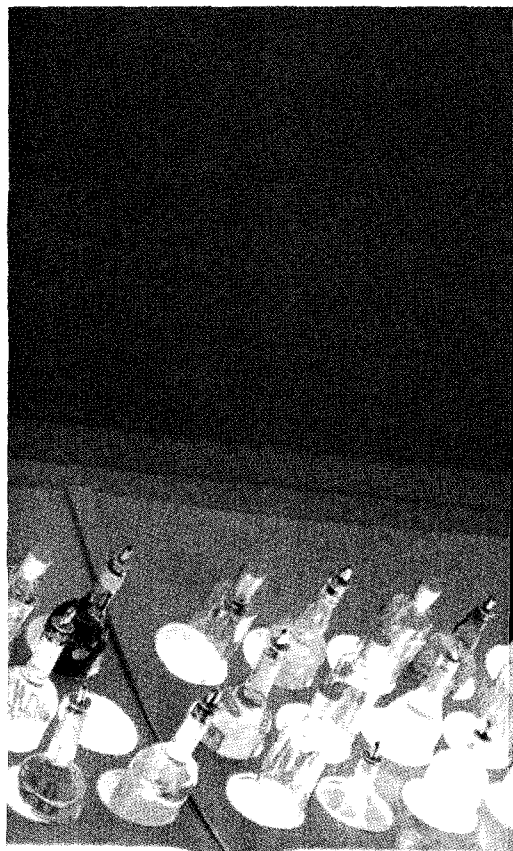
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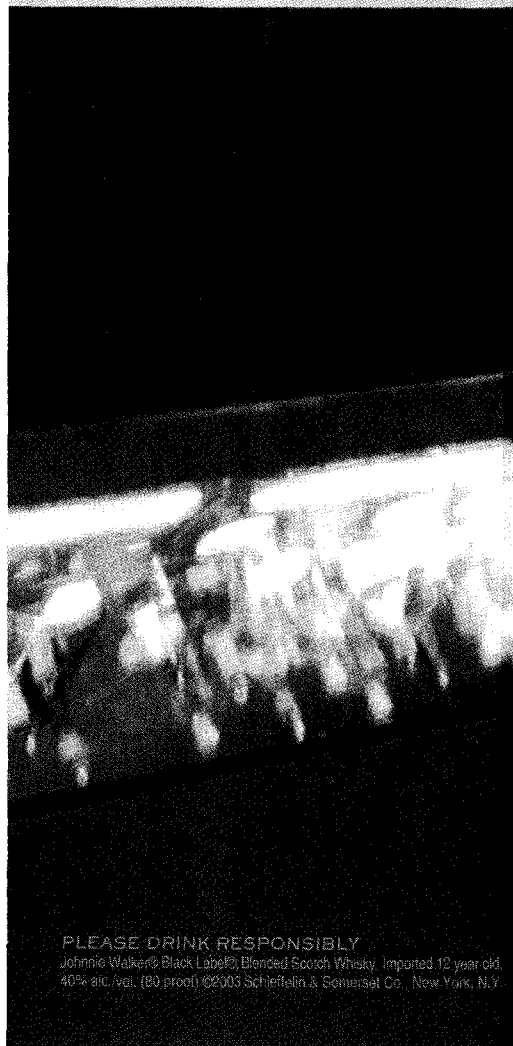
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BOOK CURRENTS

Scare Tactics

"Why is the Hudson Valley haunted?" Judith Richardson asks in **POSSESSIONS** (Harvard), a study of "the history and uses of haunting" upstate. Richardson reviews the area's bloody rebellions and wandering ghost sailors, drawing on



county archives, travelogues, letters, and the usual literary sources. She finds that the valley's ghostly legacy derives, in part, from a fraught history of land ownership, the influence of Dutch and German folklore, and a naturally ominous landscape—as well as from entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. Richardson herself seems a little susceptible to the atmosphere that spooked Ichabod Crane. The "mountains loom and brood," she writes, and she seeks to explain "how hauntings intersect with cultural history, public memory, economics, and land issues."

The teen-age ghosts in Stewart O'Nan's new novel, **THE NIGHT COUNTRY** (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux), also profit from native superstition. "This is still a new England, garden-green, veined with black rivers and massacres," one of them says. The narrators were killed in a Halloween car accident, and, a year later, skittish townspeople are easy marks for their amusement. The dead are bent on revenge, which they get, of course, in an apotheosis of middle-of-the-night adolescent car rides through dark landscapes.

In Sara Gran's **COME CLOSER** (SoHo), the haunting starts in the office of a young architect, Amanda, who ignores early signs of otherworldly intervention, such as a mysterious tapping in her apartment and the delivery of a book, "Demon Possession Past and Present." But soon she is witnessing old murders and, alas, committing new ones. Amanda's detached and witty narration helps us believe, as she says, that "what we think is impossible happens all the time."

—Lauren Porcaro

chairs, stools, upended plastic buckets, and a dolly. She composes with endlessly surprising logic, and the component parts turn as weightless as music in the eye. Through Nov. 15. (Gorney Bravin + Lee, 534 W. 26th St. 212-352-8372.)

CHARLINE VON HEYL

This German transplant to New York juggles innumerable modern and historical modes and manners in arch but zestful flurries of brush play in a series of abstract paintings and drawings. The artist-critic Collier Schorr has identified her with German artists who, if they were American, might be "spoofing painting, but since the German sense of humor is decidedly less spontaneous, one could say they were placing painting as a subject." Whatever Von Heyl's dashing performances amount to, they are oddly satisfying. Through Nov. 8. (Petzel, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9467.)

Short List

JOHN WESLEY

Fredericks Freiser, 504 W. 22nd St.
212-633-6555. Through Nov. 22.

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

YOKO ONO

Ono has built a giant wing-tip shoe, a giant watch, a giant broken dish, and a giant bloody board filled with bent nails, on the premise that imagining the city from a cockroach's point of view should reveal certain weaknesses of society. Her billboard-size pseudo-documentary photographs of various untimely deaths suggest that we are somehow cockroaches, a point repeated with the inclusion of barbed wire and a heap of plaster bodies. Incongruously—same politics, different personality—Ono has also placed tables throughout the gallery, with jumbled maps of the U.S. and the world and "Imagine Peace" stamps with which to mark them. Through Nov. 1. (Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster St. 212-343-7300.)

Short List

ALEX KATZ

Blum, 99 Wooster St. 212-343-0441.
Through Nov. 15.

PHOTOGRAPHY

ADAM FUSS

This well-conceived and ambitious show about birth and death includes a series of photographs from Fuss's boyhood, from birth to age twelve, all mounted on the sort of enamel stone plaques that are used on Russian gravestones. The photos—some black-and-white, some tinted—look like found images of some long-dead child's anonymous childhood. The large-scale images of butterfly chrysalides are lovely, and the photograms are surprising, but the mirrored daguerreotypes of human skulls are the most mesmerizing. Each surface is so reflective and silvery that while viewing the memento mori you also gaze back at your own face. Through Nov. 15. (Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 212-242-7727.)

SIMEN JOHAN

In his fourth show in as many years, Johan changes his subject: the damaged children that have been his signature have been exchanged for provocative tableaux that seem to be the result of sinister, child-like mischief. In one picture, a league of misshapen, humanoid snow creatures wait in an uninhabited landscape; in another, the carcasses of various small woodland creatures scale tree trunks in a dark forest. In the show's most powerful image, two fowls claw furiously at each other in midair, their beaks and eyes bound shut with tape. Through Dec. 6. (Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 212-414-0370.)

AARON SISKIND

A retrospective of the late photographer's work. The pictures have been arranged thematically

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rather than chronologically; one wall of Siskind's typically exuberant images—thick lashings of paint photographed on streets, walls, and brick—looks like a group of Abstract Expressionist paintings. The photos are strikingly painterly, but never in the way you'd expect—like one of strokes of tar on pavement, as graceful as Japanese calligraphy. (Three other institutions will also mark the hundredth anniversary of Siskind's birth in the coming months: the Whitney, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Andrea Rosen gallery.) Through Dec. 6. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 24th St. 212-989-7600.)

WILLIAM HENRY FOX TALBOT

Talbot, the British pioneer, worked far longer—twenty-five years—on perfecting the photogravure process than he did on the paper-negative calotype, for which he is most remembered. This exhibit, the first ever on the subject, includes early experimental examples from the eighteen-fifties, including studies of the same plants and cloth he used in his earlier "photogenic drawings," and photoglyphic engravings, like the gorgeous picture of the moon, produced in 1864. Talbot's development—printing photographic images onto steel or copper plates, making them infinitely reproducible—revolutionized the illustration of books, and his aesthetic genius never suffered in the process. Through Nov. 21. (Kraus, at the Mark Hotel, 25 E. 77th St. 212-794-2064.)

Short List

BRUCE DAVIDSON

Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010. Through Nov. 1.

MIRANDA LICHTENSTEIN

Dee, 545 W. 20th St. 212-924-7545. Through Nov. 8.

SALLY MANN

Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070. Through Nov. 15.

HIROSHI SUGIMOTO

Sonnabend, 536 W. 22nd St. 212-627-1018. Through Nov. 1.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S

Oct. 30 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Furniture and decorative works of art from the nineteenth century. ♦ Oct. 31 at 10 A.M. and 2 and Nov. 1 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Are James Abbott McNeill Whistler's prints superior to his paintings? Whistler, a man of many social and artistic agendas, seems to relax in the casually evocative etchings of his "Nocturne" series, which did for dusk what Monet's paintings, executed around the same time, did for sunrise. Four works from the series, together with more than a hundred other prints by Whistler, will headline this auction of nearly a thousand prints by artists ranging from Rembrandt to Rauschenberg. Most of the images are iconic—Warhol's soup cans, Johns's targets, Toulouse-Lautrec's *fêtards*. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S

Nov. 4 at 10 A.M. and 2: A sale of prints from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is highlighted by fifty works by the German Expressionist Max Beckmann—an artist who knew how to communicate pain and cruelty through the contrast of darkness and light—on subjects as diverse as German café life, religion, and the decadent upper class he knew inside and out. Works by Homer, Hopper, Chagall, and Cassatt are also featured. ♦ Nov. 4 at 7 and Nov. 5 at 10 A.M. and 2: Impressionist and modern art, featuring works by Léger, Modigliani, and Van Gogh. ♦ Oct. 29 at 10 A.M. and 2: Bouguereau's painting "La Petite Tricoteuse" is a highlight of a sale of nineteenth-century European art. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

PHILLIPS

Oct. 30 at 11 A.M.: A sale of American paintings. (450 W. 15th St. 212-940-1200.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

"La Traviata," with Renée Fleming, Rolando Villazon (a wonderful new Alfredo), and Bruno Caproni; Paul Nadler conducts. (Oct. 29 at 8 and Nov. 1 at 1:30.) ♦ The trick to pulling off the virtuosic tomfoolery of "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" is to make Rossini's turns, trills, and triplets sound effortless while keeping Beaumarchais's witty little play on track, and this revival of John Cox's tradi-

NEW YORK CITY OPERA

John Steinbeck's disenfranchised characters have little to show for themselves besides their basic instincts—not unlike the veteran composer Carlisle Floyd, who in "Of Mice and Men" displays just enough stagecraft to transform the sorrows of Lennie and George into nourishing operatic fare. Anthony Dean Griffey's clarion tenor and fierce dramatic commitment give the fractured twists of Lennie's softened mind an almost frightening verisimilitude, and Rod Nelman's firm baritone makes George's failed efforts to control his wayward friend all the more noble; the soprano Nancy Allen Lundy, as the ranch boss Curley's all too



"Utamaro Drinking, Bumstead Mad," by John Wesley, at Fredericks Freiser (see Art).

tional production feels labored. Antonio Siragusa's début Almaviva offers an open, natural ease, Russell Braun's rich, muscled Figaro sports class-clown charm, and John Del Carlo is a merrily bellowing Bartolo. But the thick-voiced Susanne Mentzer makes a bit too much of her star turn, telegraphing her intentions to the audience, and Bruno Campanella, in the pit, pushes the composer's fleet tempos with businesslike detachment. (Paula Almerares replaces Mentzer in the first of the week's performances.) (Oct. 30 and Nov. 1 at 8.) ♦ "La Bohème," with Hei-Kyung Hong, Zvetelina Vassileva, Roberto Aronica, and Richard Zeller; Daniel Oren conducts. (Oct. 31 and Nov. 3 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

tempting wife, is a four-alarm fire poured into a svelte cotton dress. Willie Anthony Waters, the conductor, shapes Floyd's jagged instrumental lines with a cool hand. (Oct. 29 at 7:30.) ♦ With Paul Mow replacing Griffey. (Oct. 31 at 8.) ♦ "Carmen," with Jessie Raven (in the title role), Melanie Vaccari, David Corman, and Michael Chioldi; Gary Thor Wedow conducts. (Oct. 30 at 7:30.) ♦ The soprano Lori Phillips leads the cast of "Turandot," also featuring Oksana Kroyvt-ska, Phillip Webb (as Calaf), and Seth Malkin; George Manahan. (Nov. 1 at 1:30.) ♦ "The Magic Flute" (sung in English), featuring Julianne Borg, Cheryl Evans, Don Frazure, David Adam Moore, and Bert K. Johnson; Neal Goren. (Nov. 1 at

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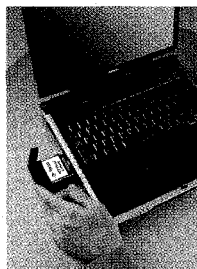
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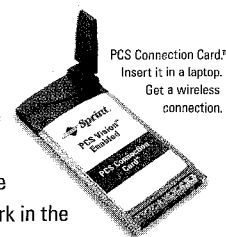


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8.) ♦ "The Mikado," featuring Anna Christy, Myrna Paris, Keith Jameson, Richard Suart, and Jan Opalach; Gerald Steichen. (Nov. 2 at 1:30 and Nov. 4 at 7:30.) (New York State Theatre. 212-870-5570.)

"THE BEE OPERA"

Sorrel Hays's madcap show is a radical-feminist parable on patriarchy and the world of bees (whose dronings have inspired her musical material). The singers Elizabeth Knauer and Beth Griffith rule the hive for a three-week run. (Medicine Show, 549 W. 52nd St. 212-262-4216. Oct. 30-31 and Nov. 1 at 8 and Nov. 2 at 4. Through Nov. 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Lorin Maazel continues his three-week festival of Beethoven's symphonies and piano concertos. The generous sampling of keyboard talent this week begins with Gianluca Cascioli, whose Harry Potterish looks mask an interpreter of daring and originality. He makes his Philharmonic debut with the Piano Concerto No. 3; Maazel also conducts the Symphonies Nos. 4 and 5. (Oct. 28 and Oct. 30 at 7:30.) ♦ Krystian Zimerman's poetic and aristocratic style should be a good match for the Piano Concerto No. 4, which he plays on a program that includes the "Fidelio" Overture and the "Pastoral" Symphony. (Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 at 8.) ♦ The remarkable young American pianist Jonathan Biss is the guest artist for a concert featuring the "Leonore" Overture No. 2, the Symphony No. 7, and the Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Emperor"). (Nov. 4 and Nov. 6 at 7:30.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC SYMPHONY
Performing music by Beethoven and Mahler and Stravinsky's 1967 revision of "The Rite of Spring"; Kenneth Kiesler conducts. (Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 30 at 8. No tickets required.)

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S

Jane Glover, a British conductor who first established herself as director of the London Mozart Players, makes her Carnegie Hall debut with familiar fare: Mozart's Symphony No. 29 in A Major and Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-Flat Major and Haydn's valedictory Symphony No. 104 ("London"). The guest in the concerto, Vladimir Feltsman, should provide some mystery and fire to counterpoint Glover's no-nonsense style. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 30 at 8.)

ST. PETERSBURG STATE ACADEMIC CHOIR

Only the famed chapel choirs of Oxford and Cambridge can boast a heritage as ancient as that of this five-hundred-year-old group, which comes to New York to celebrate the three-hundredth anniversary of its home city with a program of a cappella sacred works by Rachmaninoff and Bortiansky, along with a selection of folk songs. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 212-721-6500. Nov. 1 at 8.)

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHORUS OF

NEW YORK CITY: "VISIONS OF PEACE"

Two new works for chorus and string orchestra by the American composer Daniel Brewbaker (a recent favorite of Valery Gergiev's) highlight a concert of music with an Irish theme, part of the New Millennium Festival's "Visions of Peace" series; among the groups performing with them are the New York University Singers and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (St. Stephen's Church, 151 E. 28th St. Nov. 2 at 3. A donation is suggested.)

VIENNA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Vienna's second orchestra—a distinguished ensemble that gave the premières of such works as Bruckner's Symphony No. 9 and Strauss's "Metamorphosen"—offers two concerts with its music director, Vladimir Fedoseyev, and the dashing young Danish violinist Nikolaj Znaider. Nov. 2 at 3: Schubert's Third Symphony, Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, and waltzes by Ziehrer and Johann Strauss II. ♦ Nov. 3 at 8: Beethoven's Violin Concerto and Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica"). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500.)

RECITALS

"ROREM AT 80—A CONCERT CELEBRATION"

This last Rorem birthday concert (for a while, anyway) is the only one to focus on his instrumental music, which shows the composer at his most tart and terse. It includes not only the world première of "Four Colors," for clarinet and piano, but also one of Rorem's most vivid song cycles: "Ariel," based on poems by Sylvia Plath. The performers include the soprano Arianna Zukerman, the clarinetist Thomas Piercy, and the violinist Rolf Schulte. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 29 at 8.)

BARGEMUSIC

The cellist Zuill Bailey is featured in two programs at the floating chamber-music series. Oct. 30-31 at 7:30: The violinist Kurt Nikkanen and the pianist Jeremy Denk join Bailey for Brahms's Piano Trio in C Minor on a program with music by Bach and Kodály (the Duo for Violin and Cello). ♦ Nov. 1 at 7:30 and Nov. 2 at 4: Piano trios by Beethoven, Shostakovich, and Brahms (the Trio in B Major, Op. 8), with the violinist Giora Schmidt and the pianist Navah Perlman. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

"WORLD TO COME"

The new-music cello goddess Maya Beiser pushes the limits of the solo concert with this première-rich program of contemporary cello works that features Beiser accompanying herself through the magic of multi-tracking. The new pieces (all written for her) include the arresting eponymous work, alternately aching and serene, by fellow Bang on a Can veteran David Lang; Osvaldo Golijov's eerily beautiful "Mariel," drawn from the indigenous melodies of northern Brazil; and Steve Reich's "Cello Counterpoint," which has Beiser playing along with seven prerecorded cello parts. Also with pieces by Pärt and Andriessen and video contributions by the Israeli artist Irit Batsry. (Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 30 at 7:30.)



The young Italian pianist Gianluca Cascioli makes his debut with the New York Philharmonic this week.

**"SCHOENBERG AND KANDINSKY:
FIRST IMPRESSIONS"**

It was at a concert of his music in January of 1911 that the composer first met the artist, who became not only Schoenberg's painting teacher but a lasting friend. The pianist Sarah Rothenberg, the mezzo-soprano Mary Nessinger, and the Pacifica Quartet recreate that historic Munich program of songs and chamber music (including the String Quartet No. 2, from 1908, the spellbinding work that first opened the floodgates of atonality). (Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. 212-423-3337. Oct. 30 at 8.)

**CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY
OF LINCOLN CENTER**

A bouquet of French masterworks by Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Poulenc, and Ravel ("La Valse," for two pianos), performed by the oboist Stephen Taylor, the pianist Orion Weiss, and others. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. Oct. 31 at 8 and Nov. 2 at 5.)

LEON FLEISHER

The eminent pianist offers a program of left-hand and two-hand repertoire by Sessions, Bach, Schubert (the Sonata in B-Flat Major, D. 960), and Leon Kirchner. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 31 at 8.)

MUSIC AT THE 92ND STREET Y

Nov. 1 at 8: Los Romeros perform music by Boccherini, Torroba, and Albéniz, along with works by members of the illustrious first family of classical guitar. ♦ Nov. 2 at 3: Kyung-Wha Chung, in her only New York recital of the season, performs Bach's Violin Sonata in G Minor (by herself) along with the Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2 by Schumann (with the pianist Phillip Moll). (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.)

BRADLEY BROOKSHIRE

The young star of the harpsichord scene continues his eight-concert series of Bach's complete works for the instrument with the English Suites Nos. 4-6, along with an added attraction, the première of a harpsichord concerto by the young composer Misha Zupko (with the assistance of the Corigliano Quartet). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Nov. 2 at 3.)

MUSIC BEFORE 1800 SERIES: POMERIUM

One of the country's finest chamber choirs offers "La Contenance Française," a program of music by Machaut, Mauduit, Du Fay, and other masters of ancient tones. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 212-666-9266. Nov. 2 at 4.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS

Oct. 29 at 7: Colson Whitehead offers selections from his essay collection, "The Colossus of New York: A City in Thirteen Parts." (BookCourt, 163 Court St., Brooklyn. 718-875-3677.) ♦ Oct. 30 at 7:30: The Poetry Society of America presents Charles Bernstein, Kimiko Hahn, D. Nurkse, Sekou Sundiata, and other New York poets. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. For more information, call 212-254-9628.) ♦ Nov. 2 at 3: The journalist Wendell Jamieson, the novelist Matt Mihovich, and the poets Matthew Rohrer and Joshua Beckman read from their work. (Sunny's, 253 Conover St., Red Hook, Brooklyn. For more information, call 718-875-3677.) ♦ Nov. 4 at 8: T. J. Stiles reads from his biography, "Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War." (Rocky Sullivan's, 129 Lexington Ave., between 28th and 29th Sts. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS

Oct. 29 at 8: The Columbia University philosophy professor Lydia Goehr and the pianist Stefan Litwin celebrate the centennial of Theodor W. Adorno's birth with a discussion of the German musicologist's theories and a performance of works by the likes of Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799.) ♦ Oct. 29 at 8: The former First Lady Barbara Bush talks about her life. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.) ♦ Oct. 30 at 6: Jonathan Weinberg, a senior fellow at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, interviews the artist and author Maurice Sendak. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 212-229-5488.)

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Domenikos Theotokopoulos (El Greco), *Saint Peter*, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial © Patrimonio Nacional.

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MOVIES OPENING

ALIEN: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

Ridley Scott has added new scenes to his 1979 science-fiction film. Opening Oct. 29.

DIE MOMMIE DIE

Charles Busch wrote this parody of melodramatic fifties movies, in which he impersonates a female pop diva. Also with Jason Priestley, Philip Baker Hall, and Natasha Lyonne. Directed by Mark Rucker. Opening Oct. 31. (34th Street Theatre.)

GIRLHOOD

A documentary directed by Liz Garbus that follows two girls in Maryland's juvenile-detention system. Opening Oct. 29. (Quad Cinema.)

THE HUMAN STAIN

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 31. (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 1, East 86th Street Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

SHATTERED GLASS

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 31. (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

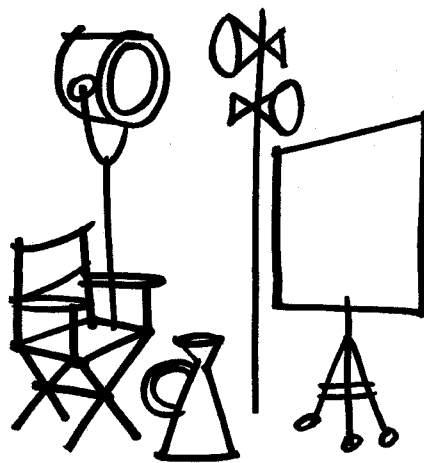
SUSPENDED ANIMATION

John Hancock directed this horror film, in which a Hollywood animator gets separated from his friends while on a snowmobile trip in northern Michigan. Opening Oct. 31. (Quad Cinema.)

FILM NOTES

BEYOND BORDERS

High-minded romantic drama set against "strife-torn" (there is no other phrase) backgrounds. The sensationally charismatic Clive Owen is Nick Cal-



ments that are, one supposes, a kind of relief workers' foreplay, and finally get passionate in various uncomfortable climes. The movie is not worthless—some of the backgrounds are vivid and scary—but it can't break free of its old-Hollywood silliness.—*David Denby* (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

This 1920 silent production, starring John Barrymore in his matinée-idol prime, extends Robert Louis Stevenson's tale to the Manichean limit. The good doctor starts out too good for the tastes of his own future father-in-law, who drags Jekyll to a music hall with a beautiful dancer (Nita Naldi)—

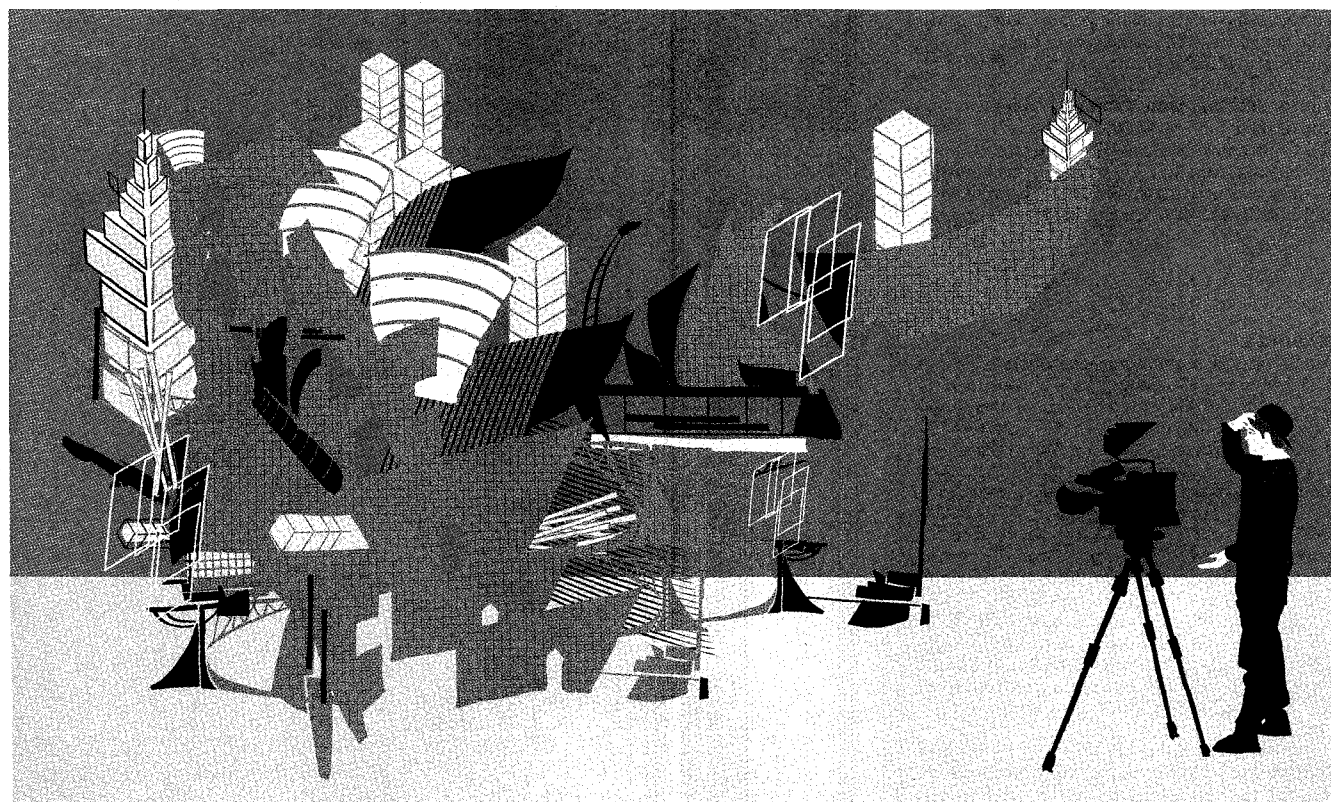
to electrify the makeup. The movie attains otherworldly horror when its special effects grow more extreme: at one point Hyde appears as a furry, man-size crab, and in a grisly climactic murder he devolves into a semi-simian vampire—a Neanderthal Nosferatu.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; Oct. 31 and Nov. 1.)

ELEPHANT

Gus Van Sant's fascinating, mysterious, semidocumentary meditation on the Columbine massacre is not very satisfying, but it's still something to see. Van Sant and his cameraman, Harris Savides, gently but persistently pad after one student and then another at a nameless school, photographing casual encounters from various points of view. The multiple versions of the same trivial event suggest the utter contingency of disaster: one teen-ager turns in a certain direction and avoids the killers, two others do not. For Van Sant, what matters is the dullness of school social life—gossip, flirtations, hazing—in which time and sequence count less than states of being. He punctuates the banal school scenes with beautiful shots of scudding clouds and a darkening sky, as if all of eternity were contained in a passing moment when children die. With amateur actors playing the students.—*D.D.* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/27/03.) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

EYES WITHOUT A FACE

This famous 1959 film by Georges Franju opened in this country on double bills in a dubbed version called "The Horror Chamber of Dr. Faustus," but it's perhaps the most austere elegant horror film ever made. Franju called it "a poetic fantasy," and it's a symbolist attack on the ethics of scientists. Though in its way it's as simpleminded as the usual romantic young poet's denunciations of war or commerce, it has a vague, floating, lyric sense of dread which goes beyond the simpler effects of hor-



A series of documentaries about famous architects screens at the Gramercy Theatre on November 3.

lahan, a fiery London doctor who devotes himself to the mangled poor in Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Chechnya. Angelina Jolie, with a witchy drape of black hair surrounding her face, is Sarah Jordan, a married American who keeps leaving her husband (Linus Roache, in a pathetic role) and traipsing after the doctor, showing up with supplies and keen moral intuitions. They have stormy argu-

and thus paves the way for Hyde. When Barrymore made this film, he was preparing for a role as Hamlet and playing Richard III onstage; the melancholy Dane influences his Jekyll just as the jesting, malevolent humpback does his Hyde. Contrary to conventional wisdom, what's extraordinary about Barrymore's Hyde is not how much he achieves without makeup but how well he uses his charisma

ror movies that don't make intellectual claims. Franju's approach is almost as purified and as mystic as Bresson's. The story is about a surgeon (Pierre Brasseur) who, in systematic experiments, removes the faces of beautiful young kidnapped women and tries to graft them onto the ruined head of his daughter (Edith Scob). He keeps failing, the girls are destroyed, yet he persists, in a terrible parody of the

PETER HAMLIN

scientific method. The film is both bizarrely sophisticated (with Alida Valli as the mad surgeon's mistress, doing the kidnapping in a black leather coat) and ridiculously naïve (in its plot elements). With Juliette Mayniel as Edna, François Guérin as Jacques, and Claude Brasseur as the Inspector. The cinematography is by the great Eugen Schüfftan; the music is by Maurice Jarre; the superb gowns are by Givenchy. In French.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; Oct. 31–Nov. 4.)

IN THE CUT

A Manhattan-set art thriller of the worst kind, with harsh, high-contrast lighting, a jiggling camera, and a version of "Que Será, Será" that sounds neurotic rather than defiant. Meg Ryan is Frannie, the lonely, lost girl in the big city who is menaced by a mad killer but puts her trust in a sexy cop (Mark Ruffalo) who may or may not be the murderer. Ryan wears a light-brown wig in an apparent homage to the smart, masochistic character that Jane Fonda played in the 1971 thriller "Klute," and she's bravely naked in a few scenes, but she doesn't have the range and power to make us overlook what's tiresome in Frannie's character; she's a ninny wandering through a maelstrom. Directed by Jane Campion, who worked with the novelist Susanna Moore on the adaptation of Moore's 1995 novel.—*D.D.* (10/27/03) (Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Sunshine Cinema.)

INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

Wagging his eyebrows and smiling broadly, George Clooney does some of his most self-confident acting yet as a sharp Los Angeles divorce lawyer, and Catherine Zeta-Jones is suitably deadpan as a voracious beauty who marries wealthy men and then finds spurious reasons to dump them and take their money. As these two lock horns, this Coen-brothers movie seems, for a while, to be the kind of glossy, high-style dialogue comedy from the forties that both celebrated and satirized heartless people with a gift for gab. But then the Coens fall into their usual goony-bird comedy games, and, though some of the jokes are funny, they are funny at a much lower level. Geoffrey Rush has a good bit at the beginning as a Hollywood sleaze who likes to sing along with his car radio. Also with Cedric the Entertainer and Edward Herrmann, surprisingly cast as a dirty old man.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

KILL BILL—VOL. 1

In this Quentin Tarantino fantasy pastiche of samurai and martial-arts films, the trunk of a body, its head lopped off, will spurt blood like a fountain. We know that the non-stop violence is not meant to be real: for starters, the blood looks like cranberry juice. Yet Tarantino is working in a photographic medium, and the real-world associations are not so easy to shrug off. Tarantino's heroine, Uma Thurman, kills another female warrior in front of the woman's little girl, and the child doesn't react. Tarantino wants the shock of a mother killed in front of her daughter without the audience undergoing any discomfort at all. The movie is what's formally known as decadence and commonly known as crap. Saying that it's an homage to long-established genres in Hong Kong doesn't reduce its pop-nihilistic stupidity. Some of the sequences have a scintillating visual flair, but you come out feeling nothing at all. And this is only the first half.—*D.D.* (10/13/03) (Astor Plaza, BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Cinema 1, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

LOST IN TRANSLATION

Nothing much happens in the new film by the writer-director Sofia Coppola, but she has first-rate abilities as an observer and as a rueful comedian, and much of the movie is sweetly funny and satisfying. In Tokyo, a burned-out American movie star named Bob Harris (Bill Murray) shows up to appear in a whiskey ad. Stranded in a sleekly pompous modern hotel, he can't connect with anything or even sleep, but he does hook up (chastely) with a very young woman, Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson), whose fashion-photographer husband (Giovanni

Ribisi) is rapidly slipping away from her. Both Bob and Charlotte are in emotional limbo, and they become an odd, inappropriate couple. Murray has never been this quiet, this wary, this subtly acid before—or this warm, either. The drama of the movie, such as it is, lies in seeing just how much he will respond and when.—*D.D.* (9/15/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

MY NEIGHBOR TOTORO

It's slight yet sublime: a modern cartoon fairy tale that's delicate and free. To be close to his wife, who's being treated for an unnamed illness in a rural hospital, a genial academic dad moves into a country house with his two small daughters. There the girls meet tiny "dust bunnies"—bright-eyed ebony balls of fur who assume squatters' rights in deserted homes (and leave en masse when the homes become occupied)—and also a string of Totoros, toy-bunny-like creatures who range from tiny to king-size. A giant Totoro, with an ear-shattering roar and the ability to fly on a magic top or leap to the treetops in a single bound, becomes their pal and protector. The animator, Hayao Miyazaki, sustains a mood of gentle startlement that reawakens young and old eyes alike to the vitality of made-up movie imagery. Originally released in 1988. In English.—*M.S.* (Thalia Theatre; Nov. 1.)

MYSTIC RIVER

Clint Eastwood's sombre masterpiece, from a novel by Dennis Lehane (Brian Helgeland did the adaptation), is about a working-class Catholic community in Boston held in thrall by an old crime. Back in the seventies, one of three eleven-year-old boys who were close friends was taken away by two men pretending to be cops and sexually assaulted for days before he finally escaped. But it turns out that Dave (Tim Robbins) never escaped at all. Twenty-five years later, he is still shrouded in dreams and terror, and his two friends, Sean (Kevin Bacon),

a homicide detective, and Jimmy (Sean Penn), an ex-con who runs a corner grocery, still feel the shame of not helping him. When Jimmy's nineteen-year-old daughter is murdered, the three are uneasily brought back together again. The movie's feeling for the neighborhood milieu is so convincing because there's no distinction between background and foreground—everything we see (faces, living rooms, back yards, weather, battered old cars) is dramatically relevant. Eastwood directs in a gray, end-of-day light and with a minimum of camera rhetoric; he lets the script and the actors do the work. Bacon tightens his facial muscles into a mask; Robbins looks puffy and frightened; and Penn does a few semi-psychotic soliloquies in which he takes off into the stratosphere, joining Marlon Brando as one of the great tragic actors of the screen. With Marcia Gay Harden and Laura Linney, both in devastating form.—*D.D.* (10/13/03) (Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

OUT OF TIME

Denzel Washington and the director Carl Franklin, who worked together on the sultry "Devil in a Blue Dress," team up again in a thriller about a Florida police chief who must solve a double homicide that he's been unjustly accused of committing. It's a standard crime movie that rises above its conventional twists and turns thanks to the taut, intelligent direction of Franklin and the strong performances by supporting players (Eva Mendes and Nora Dunn, among others) who would all be at home in an Elmore Leonard novel.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

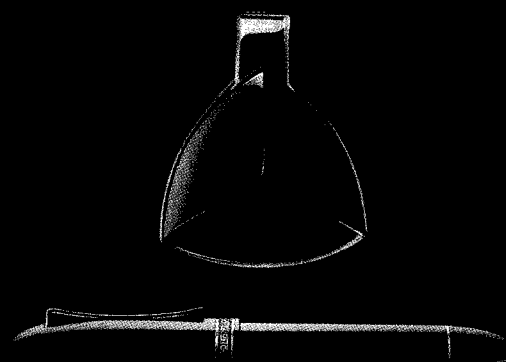
PIECES OF APRIL

Katie Holmes continues to distance herself from her "Dawson's Creek" past, in this sensitive drama written and directed by Peter Hedges. The apple-cheeked

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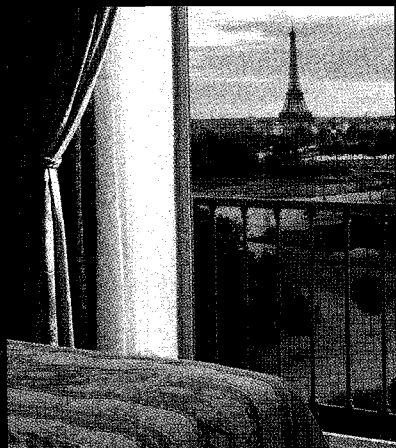


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actress surrounds her eyes with mascara and slumps her shoulders as April, a rebellious daughter living a shabby-chic life style on the Lower East Side. Her transformation works, for the most part, but the movie's real center of gravity is Patricia Clarkson, as April's mother, suffering from breast cancer. It's a challenging role; Hedges wrote the character as someone who can no longer tolerate sympathy, and Clarkson manages to express vulnerability along with the dry, caustic wit of a woman who has made her reckoning with death. The movie has April reuniting with her mother for Thanksgiving, but it's not a depressing or cheaply sentimental story. With Oliver Platt, Alison Pill, Alice Drummond, and Derek Luke lending fine support as family and boyfriend. Shot on digital video, in a style that is sometimes claustrophobic.—*Michael Agger* (Lincoln Square and Sunshine Cinema.)

RUNAWAY JURY

Though this legal thriller has been billed as Hoffman v. Hackman, the two screen legends have only one scene together, a crisp give-and-take in the men's room. What a letdown—as is the rest of this convoluted adaptation of a John Grisham novel. The courtroom should have been the center of the action. But, while Hoffman is in place as a principled attorney putting the gun companies on trial, Hackman remains off-site as a high-tech jury consultant who watches the proceedings through hidden cameras. It's left to John Cusack and Rachel Weisz, as a mysterious team also bent on manipulating the jury, to confront Hackman. Not exactly a title bout. Directed by Gary Fleder, with a heavy hand.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, 62nd & Broadway, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

SCHOOL OF ROCK

Fans of Jack Black, your cup runneth over. He plays Dewey Finn, a mediocre but enthusiastic guitarist who bluffs his way into a substitute-teaching position at an exclusive private elementary school. At first, the job is purgatory, but then it's paradise: some of the fifth graders turn out to be skilled classical musicians, and soon Black begins instructing them in the finer points of power chords. The movie nostalgically celebrates the liberating power of classic rock—the way it could impart coolness to all true believers. The kids top the charts in adorableness, and their acting, for better or worse, belongs to the amateurish tradition of "The Bad News Bears." Mike White's somewhat (for him) generic script sets the stage for Black to cut loose. The actor has a knack for moving his body in funny ways, and he sings and prances for the camera in a risky and aerobic performance. Joan Cusack offers fine support as the tightly wound principal. Richard Linklater directed, with his trademark touch of conveying milieu.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE STATION AGENT

The writer and director Tom McCarthy has turned his attention to a New Jersey backwater and come up with something lyrical, taciturn, and stripped of sentimentality. Peter Dinklage plays Fin, a dwarf who inherits a cabinlike home beside a railroad track in Morris County, Newfoundland. Fin loves trains and not much else—hardly surprising, given that the world has shown him little more than a laugh and a sneer—and he is none too thrilled when his quiet space is invaded. Over time, though, he warms to the invaders: Joe (Bobby Cannavale), loud and lonely, who sells coffee and hot dogs from a neighboring van, and Olivia (Patricia Clarkson), a painter, still mourning the loss of a young son. The three of them fall in with one another, then fall out, then gradually fall back in; like some of the best short stories, the picture evades grandeur, mature enough to linger on what nearly happens. None of the central performers put a foot wrong, and McCarthy takes care not to insist that small is beautiful; rather, he and Dinklage leave us reflecting that small can be angry, tired, and tough.—*Anthony Lane* (10/6/03) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

SYLVIA

If Mel Brooks had got his hands on the story of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, we could have been treated to a chorus line of suicidal poets chanting "It's a gas!" As it is, we must make do with this bleak account of intertwining lives. Plath (Gwyneth Paltrow) meets Ted Hughes (Daniel Craig) in 1956 and marries him shortly afterward, to the polite consternation of her mother (Blythe Danner). The action switches from a morose England to a bright and bracing America, then back again; the second half of the picture leads us through the plunging of Plath's moods, the publication of her poems, and her death, in 1963. The screenwriter, John Brownlow, and the director, Christine Jeffs, handle this material with patience and tact, and Paltrow is unafraid to show the sour and simmering side of her heroine. We come away convinced of the poets' shared intensity, and deeply relieved that we are able to observe it from a safe distance.—*A.L.* (10/20/03) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

TO BE AND TO HAVE

Lean, quick, and devastatingly adroit at the age of fifty-five, the teacher Georges Lopez presides over a one-room schoolhouse in this marvellous documentary shot in the Auvergne region of France. Monsieur Lopez divides the children, ages three to eleven, into three groups, and enforces strict discipline. No one could call his methods progressive; no one could call them ineffective, either. Watching the intensity of his work from moment to moment, child by child, reveals a craft exercised on a level at which skill and love have become indistinguishable. The filmmaker Nicolas Philibert brings the same kind of dedication to his own work. The children are great, unwary camera subjects, and Philibert gives us beautifully composed views of them, granting us enough time to observe each child closely, imagine his circumstances, and see what he does or doesn't learn. The documentary is a deeply satisfying aesthetic and pedagogic experience, though Americans may wonder how such terrific children can become such irritating adults. In French.—*D.D.* (9/29/03) (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

A soft-core renovation fantasy for educated women. Frances (Diane Lane), a San Francisco writer and teacher dumped by her adulterous husband, goes on a bus tour of Tuscany and falls in love with a crumbling old villa. After many blissfully undramatic episodes—an ancient wall falls down, a toilet mysteriously emits boiling water—the house gets scraped, plastered, painted, and gardenized back into shape. It's Frances's life, of course, that really needs work. Luckily, in Rome, she finds Marcello (Raoul Bova)—yard-wide shoulders, blue eyes, all of Italian manhood in a white suit—and drives off with him in his Alfa Romeo convertible. There's a lot more of this sort of harmless, pleasant, inconsequential stuff, with much of it redeemed by the good humor of the writer-director Audrey Wells, who serves up clichés and makes fun of them at the same time. With Sandra Oh as a sharp-tongued Bay Area lesbian friend of Frances's who arrives in Tuscany to have a baby.—*D.D.* (9/29/03) (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

VARIETY LIGHTS

This first film directed by Federico Fellini (working with Alberto Lattuada as co-director) has a backstage story with a theme that he returned to later in the big, trashy phantasmagoria "Juliet of the Spirits." Giulietta Masina plays the aging mistress of the head of a touring company; he goes off with a young woman, then returns to her. It's a very simple and, in some ways, tawdry film, but Fellini shows his extraordinary talent for the dejected setting, the shabby performer, the fat old chorine, the singer who will never hit a high note. Though he deals with "artists," he doesn't deal with talent or artistry; his specialty is revealing the shoddiness of theatrical life and the forlorn hopes of the performers. For Fellini, the magic of show business is in self-delusion. He achieves some of his most memorable images in the sequence with a troupe on a backcountry road at night and in the stage

show representing the glorification of a sex goddess. Released in 1949. In Italian.—P.K. (Guggenheim Museum; Nov. 1.)

VERONICA GUERIN

The true story of a Dublin journalist who was killed by the drug dealers she was trying to expose. Cate Blanchett's fiery portrayal of Guerin, the movie's short running time, and Joel Schumacher's energetic direction should propel the film forward, but the clunky script—overly complicated and lacking tension—destroys any momentum.—B.D. (Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Sutton 1 and 2, and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

BUS 174

Film Forum.

THE FLOWER OF EVIL

Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

MORNING SUN

Film Forum.

PREY FOR ROCK AND ROLL

Sunshine Cinema.

SCARY MOVIE 3

Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, Cinema 2, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, and 34th Street Theatre.

THE SINGING DETECTIVE

First & 62nd Cinemas and Union Square.

TIBET: CRY OF THE SNOW LION

Village East Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.

Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.

Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.

Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.

Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).

East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave.

at 86th St.

84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.

Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.

(212-398-3939).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.

42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.

Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.

(212-757-2280).

Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.

New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.

19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.

Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.

Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.

72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.

64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.

Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.

Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.

34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.

Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.

Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.

Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Martial-arts movies. Oct. 31 at 7:30: "A Chinese Ghost Story" (1987, Siu-Tung Ching; in Can-

tonese). ♦ Nov. 1-2: Sammy Davis, Jr., movies. Nov. 1 at 2: Clips of Davis on television, introduced by his biographer Wil Haywood. ♦ Nov. 1 at 4:30: "Anna Lucasta" (1958, Arnold Laven). ♦ Nov. 2 at 2: "Porgy and Bess" (1959, Otto Preminger). ♦ Nov. 2 at 4:30: "A Man Called Adam" (1966, Leo Penn). ♦ Repertory nights. Nov. 1-2 at 6:30: "Ashes & Diamonds" (1958, Andrzej Wajda; in Polish).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Oct. 30-Nov. 2: "The Next Director: Hong Sang-Soo." All films are in Korean. Oct. 30 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Day a Pig Fell Into the Well" (1997). ♦ Oct. 31 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Power of Kangwon Province" (1998). ♦ Nov. 1 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Turning Gate" (2002). ♦ Nov. 2 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors (Oh! Soojung)" (2000). ♦ Sixties films. Nov. 3 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Night of the Living Dead" (1968, George Romero). ♦ In memoriam: John Schlesinger. Nov. 4 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Billy Liar" (1963).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Oct. 29-30 at 1:20, 3:20, 5:20, 7:20, and 9:20: "Au Hasard Balthazar" (1966, Robert Bresson; in French). ♦ Oct. 31-Nov. 4 at 1, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, and 10:10: "Eyes Without a Face" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL

55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through Nov. 4: The films of Isabelle Huppert. Nov. 4 at 12:30 and 3:30: "Loulou" (1980, Maurice Pialat; in French). ♦ Nov. 4 at 7: "La Vie Promise" (2002, Olivier Dahan; in French), introduced by Huppert.

GRAMERCY THEATRE

127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—In memoriam: Gregory Peck. Oct. 30 at 2 and Oct. 31 at 6: "Spellbound" (1944, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ Special screening. Oct. 31 at 8:30: "Those Who Love Me Can Take the Train" (1998, Patrice Chéreau; in French), introduced by the director. ♦ A Francesca Archibugi retrospective. All films are in Italian. Nov. 1 at 1: "Shooting the Moon" (1998). ♦ Nov. 1 at 7:15: "Tomorrow" (2000). ♦ Nov. 1 at 9:15: "By Nightfall" (1990). ♦ Nov. 2 at 6: "The Great Pumpkin" (1992). ♦ Nov. 2 at 7:45: "With Closed Eyes" (1994). ♦ Documentaries about influential architects. Nov. 3 at 6: Frank Lloyd Wright, Paul Rudolph, and Rem Koolhaas. ♦ Nov. 3 at 8:30: Philip Johnson and Frank Gehry.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—Through Jan. 14: A Federico Fellini retrospective. Nov. 1 at 3: "Variety Lights" (†). ♦ Nov. 1 at 7: "The White Sheik" (1952; in Italian).

SUNSHINE CINEMA

139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. Oct. 31-Nov. 1: "Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" (1993, Henry Selick).

THALIA THEATRE

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Nov. 1 at 2 and 4:15: "My Neighbor Totoro" (†). ♦ Nov. 1 at 6:30 and Nov. 2 at 2 and 6:30: "The Decalogue: Parts V and VI" (1996, Krzysztof Kieslowski; in Polish). ♦ Nov. 1 at 9 and Nov. 2 at 4:15 and 9: "The Decalogue: Parts VII and VIII" (1996, Kieslowski; in Polish).

WALTER READE THEATRE

Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Nov. 5: "Yasujiro Ozu: A Centennial Celebration." All films are in Japanese. Oct. 29 at 2 and 6:30: "Dragnet Girl" (1933). ♦ Oct. 29 at 4 and 8:30: "Floating Weeds" (1959). ♦ Oct. 30 at 1:30 and 6:15: "Passing Fancy" (1933). ♦ Oct. 30 at 3:30 and 8:20: "Late Autumn" (1960). ♦ Nov. 1 at 4:15 and 8:30: "A Mother Should Be Loved" (1934). ♦ Nov. 1 at 6:15, Nov. 2 at 3:30, and Nov. 4 at 1: "The End of Summer" (1961). ♦ Nov. 2 at 1:30 and 5:35: "A Story of Floating Weeds" (1934). ♦ Nov. 3 at 2 and 6:30 and Nov. 4 at 3:15: "An Inn in Tokyo" (1935). ♦ Nov. 3 at 3:45 and 8:15: "An Autumn Afternoon" (1962). ♦ A documentary about Ozu. Nov. 4 at 9: "Tokyo-Ga" (1985, Wim Wenders). ♦ "Golden Silents." Oct. 31 at 7:30 and Nov. 1 at 1: "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (†).



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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT THIS WORLD



It's been a long papacy, beginning, a quarter century ago, in a humility so genuine and tender, and so exotically not Italian, that Charlotte the saintly spider could have spun her "humble" over the white cap that Karol Wojtyla put on when he became Pope John Paul II. This Pope was the voice of the fall of Communism and much of the moral courage behind it. He was the voice of reconciliation between the Roman Catholic Church and two millennia of exoriated Jews. But for years he's been ill, and today he is in every way incapacitated, beholden to his oldest obsessions, his harshest dicta, and his most reactionary keepers.

What most students of the papacy agree on is that John Paul II has been blindsided by his own life. It's a syndrome that journalists recognize as professional deformation: you'd leave East Germany, or, for that matter, Poland, so undone by the experience of the police state in its particular Stalinist insanity that for a while you'd filter the rest of the world through the lens of that experience. You had to compensate for it, and when you looked at, say, the Catholic-liberation movements of Latin America you saw Red instead of seeing poverty and spiritual thirst and the first stirrings of empowerment. It's pretty much acknowl-

edged that for John Paul II time stopped with Poland at the moment of its liberation. Like many children of authoritarian states, he absorbed some strong lessons about claiming and enforcing power. Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, talking to Frank Bruni, of the *Times*, ranked his collegiality as "good in parts," like the proverbial rotten egg. The Pope is in fact an unrepentant populist. In the early eighties, when he was trying on the image of a road-show pontiff, he arrived in Paris, rushed through Mass with the Archbishop and the whole hierarchy of Church *notables* at Notre-Dame, and then headed straight to the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal—a pilgrimage center tucked into the Rue du Bac, between a pricey *traiteur* and the Bon Marché—where, a hundred and fifty years earlier, a young novice had had a vi-

sion of the Virgin. It was the kind of place where he preferred to pray, and it was also (somewhat improbably, given its location) the most frequented shrine in France, after Lourdes—a place for "the people," for miracles and cures and saints' worship and mother worship and nuns who sold slivers of the novice's few remaining bones (but were, of course, forbidden to administer the Eucharist).

Close to a billion Catholics loved the road show. John Paul II spoke to their hearts, and they were spared the rigors of dissent. They were not involved in the politics of the Holy See, or party to the increasing isolation of the Pope and his very protective Vatican circle—known to Catholic liberals as "the neocons"—from what you would have to describe as the real world. Lately, the Pope has been as much of a warrior against the consumer capitalism of the West as he was against the Communism of the East, but the truth is that most of his flock has no money with which to consume anything. James Carroll, who left the priesthood but went on to write, among other books, the remarkable profession of repentance and faith "Constantine's Sword," says, "The tragedy is that this man who was so steady a witness for justice in Eastern Europe completely missed the cry for justice in Latin America."

The Catholics who didn't love the road show were often the priests and bishops who had to hold together the pastoral life of the Church in this life, maintaining their parish churches, performing Masses, raising money, and rendering service and hope while the Pope



went looking for saints. He has made two hundred and forty-five official trips—the most recent of them to Pompeii, on October 7th, when he could barely speak. And more than four hundred and seventy Catholics have been canonized on his watch; that's more new saints than were named by all previous Popes put together. It's no secret that the priesthood is an institution in chaos, that the seminaries are losing applicants, and that in much of what is now referred to as "the two-thirds world" it is Protestant Pentecostals who are filling the needs of Christians. The Vatican has refused to confront issues having to do with women priests, married priests, gay priests with anything but disgust or denial, let alone confront the problem of AIDS, or abuse, or even condoms. Today, with the Pope so ill, no one knows who's even doing the refusing, let alone making the decisions. Thirty new cardinals were confirmed in Rome only last week, and now, of the hundred and thirty-five who are going to elect the next Pope, a hundred and thirty will owe their titles to John Paul II.

The Church is exhausted, waiting for change. Monsignor Lorenzo Albacete, the writer and theologian, says that the fatigue is so acute that cardinals he knows are hoping for another John Paul I: "Somebody smiling, somebody calm and private who writes letters to Pinocchio and will give the Church a couple of years to relax." James Carroll says that he's been thinking more in terms of another Mikhail Gorbachev: "You know, I used to think we needed another John XXIII. Now I think we need a Gorbachev, someone who says that the days of the Party are over." Father Richard McBrien, the Notre Dame theologian, hopes for "anyone who's not beholden to one of those groups": in particular, the lay order Opus Dei, which was founded in Spain in 1928, and was a friend to Franco's state through four stultifying decades, and which John Paul II revived as the first personal prelature—accountable only to him—in Church history. It is now the most politically insistent order in the Catholic world, and said to be the richest.

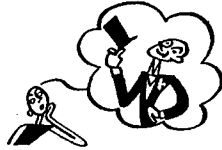
Albacete, who was in Italy this month, says that the cardinals he knows there were talking "almost as if this were going to be an election for a United Nations Secretary-General rather than for a religious leader." The issue wasn't where any

of the likely candidates stood on questions of authority or infallibility or doctrine or the next world. They knew that. "What they wanted to talk about, what they wanted to hear about, was how to prepare the Church to respond to *this* world." Which is, after all, what the election in 1978 of a Polish Pope seemed to promise.

—Jane Kramer

INK

MIDGE'S MASH NOTE



The air in Midge Decter's apartment last week was not particularly humid. Decter herself, sitting on her living-room sofa in a blue wool turtleneck, black pants, and tennis shoes, appeared cool and dry. She sat with her legs crossed and her right hand wedged between her thighs. Every now and again, she removed the hand and fiddled with the neck of her sweater. There was no sign, in other words, that she had only recently emerged from the composition of a sweaty new book about the Secretary of Defense, "Rumsfeld." She spoke of her subject admiringly, but without obvious emotion. "The key to him is that he is a wrestler," she said. "A wrestler is a lone figure. He battles one on one, and



Midge Decter

he either wins or loses. There is only one man on the mat at the end of a wrestling match. It is no accident, as the Communists used to say, that he wrestled."

In the past, Decter (who is usually characterized, along with her husband, Norman Podhoretz, as a neocon but who might more accurately be called simply a con) has written often and gloomily about changes in sexual mores: liberated women, promiscuous women, and gay men all seemed to her to portend a rise in childish hedonism and a decline in moral fibre. But recently she began to sense a different, better sort of sexual change in the air: she noticed that Donald Rumsfeld had become a sex symbol. She observed that he was called a "virtual rock star" on CNN, a "babe magnet" on Fox, and "Rumstud" by the President. He appeared in the December 2, 2002, issue of *People*, having been selected as one of the world's sexiest men. "In Washington, to be anywhere he is has become chic," a friend of Rumsfeld's told Decter. "People actually follow him around."

Her curiosity aroused, Decter, who is seventy-six, began to watch the Secretary more closely, and at some point last spring she noticed that he had begun to look more pallid and wrinkly than usual. Thinking that this might be the toll taken by the strain of war, she asked his wife about it and discovered that his poor color and skin tone were due to recent weight loss. Rumsfeld had been on a diet. "Put himself on a diet at such a time?" Decter marvelled when she heard this. Clearly, she realized, "anyone who thought, or even merely hoped, to see Donald Rumsfeld vanquished . . . was well advised to think again." She felt the same way last week when her subject was criticized for being contemptuous of Congress and for obscuring failures in Iraq. Strong, ruthless men are always resented, she knew. "The story is suspect," she said. "The whole thing sounds like a tempest in a teapot."

In her book, Decter concludes that Rumsfeld's secret is "*manliness*" (italics hers), a quality that in her estimation has something to do with being a grandfather and something to do with prairies. But, unfortunately for the reputation of her subject, the tone of the book is anything but manly. She blows him warm kisses ("He works standing up at a tall writing table, as if energy, or perhaps determination, might begin to leak away from too

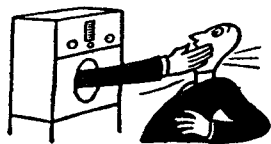
much sitting down"), and warmer ones ("This was the stuff—no other word would do—of glamour"), and even warmer ones ("Oh, *Rumsfeld*," a friend coos, "I just *love* the man!"), until poor Rumsfeld begins to melt. There comes a point in praising when effusion overcooks and becomes effluvium, a moment when the weight and rising heat of admiring descriptions (for there is a physics of adjectives) combust into tar. Everyone knows how to damn with faint praise, but damning with extravagant praise is a more esoteric enterprise, the more so because it is frequently unintentional.

It's probably just as well, then, that Decter cannot now think of another political figure who exemplifies manliness of the Rumsfeldian variety. The manliness of Arnold Schwarzenegger, for instance, is a different thing altogether. "Schwarzenegger's election has to do with California," she said, "whose geography I love but whose society I do not pretend to understand." Asked her opinion of Al Gore's attempt to enmasculate himself for the last election with the help of Naomi Wolf, Decter rolled her eyes. "I thought he was being extremely silly," she said. "That is certainly not the way to be manly. Probably manliness cannot reside in someone who thinks about being manly." She had not heard the adage that the tallest man always wins the race for President, and she doubts that it is true.

Rumsfeld, then, is the only politician in whose masculinity she takes an interest. But did she herself feel the tug, the sexual pull that Rumsfeld exerted on so many of the women with whom she spoke, including her own (non-Republican) niece? "No," she said. For Decter, Rumsfeld will only ever be a hero: "someone," as she put it in her book, "whose future was still very much before him."

—*Larissa MacFarquhar*

MAN BEHIND CURTAIN DEPT. ORACLE ON FLATBUSH



On a broad patch of sidewalk at the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Bergen Street, across from Yummy Taco, an old-fashioned wooden box



"We'll catch 'em and cook 'em when the sugar wears off."

telephone materialized recently. The phone, which is mounted on a metal stand, as if it were a floor lamp, has brass ringer bells, a wooden receiver on one side, and a crank on the other. On the dial is written "The Pintchik Oracle," and, below that, a psychedelic sticker asks, "Do you have a question? Don't be afraid and speak clearly. Say your name, ask a question."

If you stop and stare at the phone for a while, some passerby is bound to start laughing at you, at which point the thing to do is to look over at Pintchik's Hardware and then turn your gaze upward. Spanning twenty feet of the store's yellow-painted brick façade is a black electronic billboard, across which red letters zoom like *Space Invaders*. "WASSUP BABY?" the sign says. The Pintchik Oracle has spoken.

To get into an actual discussion with the Oracle, you need a little help from the Oracle's interpreter, Dean Olsher, the host of the public-radio show "The Next Big Thing." At Delphi, thousands of years ago, a gibbering priestess communicated the Oracle's wisdom to truth-seekers. But Olsher just reads the Oracle's words out loud as they appear. When the Oracle is on call, Olsher stands by the telephone, holding a radio micro-

phone and urging bystanders to step on up.

One afternoon last week, a young woman with bobbed brown hair approached, walking slowly. An easy target.

OLSHER: Excuse me, would you like to ask the Oracle a question?

WOMAN: Oracle? What oracle?

OLSHER: The Oracle is this electronic sign on the wall that knows all. See?

WOMAN: O.K. What should I be when I grow up?

ORACLE: *That's a question for Dr. Phil. What do you do?*

WOMAN: I used to be a dancer.

ORACLE: *You have a dancer's body.*

WOMAN: Who's doing this?

ORACLE: *I will hum if you will dance.*

OLSHER: I think the Oracle is coming on to you.

ORACLE: *It's safe. I'm just an electronic sign. And I use surge protection.*

WOMAN: That's horrible. What if someone sees what you're saying!

ORACLE: *Nobody ever pays attention!*

Pintchik's Hardware used to have a non-oracular electronic sign that flashed ads for pesticide and paint specials, but a couple of months ago Olsher walked by and saw the sign flashing "Borough President Marty Markowitz loves Brooklyn." He immediately came up with the

Oracle idea and thought it would make a good segment for his radio show. Olsher got in touch with the store's owner, Matthew Pintchik. Pintchik liked the sound of it, and he didn't mind the idea of having the anonymous human intelligence behind the Oracle sit by a window in his office upstairs, typing answers to questions on a laptop.

A woman in a leather jacket came to the phone. "What's the meaning of life?" she asked.

ORACLE: *Why do people insist that life has a meaning?*

WOMAN: So he answers the question with a question?

ORACLE: *I was trained by the Great Greek philosophers and the Jewish ones, too. You're Jewish, trust me.*

WOMAN: But I'm not Jewish.

ORACLE: *A great-grandfather was a Jewish shoemaker in Lodz.*

WOMAN: No.

ORACLE: *That's a Jewish head of hair you have.*

A few minutes later, five eleventh-grade boys crowded around the phone.

"Ask it, ask it . . . am I gonna be in the N.B.A.?" one of them said.

ORACLE: *Maybe. As a fan.*

"Oh, shit!" The boys laughed.

"Wait, wait," another kid said. "Ask it if I'm gonna be in the N.B.A.!"

ORACLE: *He's got to work on his free throws.*

"Woo!" the kid said. The boys all high-fived each other and ran off, shouting, "Thanks, Oracle!"

Lately, the Oracle has been getting a little power-drunk. He routinely spells out "GO TO YUMMY TACO" when a questioner annoys him. But the Oracle can be generous, too. When a man stumped the Oracle, the Oracle awarded him a twenty-dollar gift certificate to Pintchik's Hardware. The question was "Why do men have nipples?"

Olsher is cagey about the Oracle's identity. "The Oracle is a writer who lives in Brooklyn," he said. Is it Colson Whitehead? It is not. Is it Paul Auster? It is not. Is it Jonathan Lethem? It is not. "I thought you were going to ask if it was Jonathan Ames." Is it Jonathan Ames? No.

Questioning the Oracle directly about his identity was more fruitful. First, the Oracle was asked for a hint.

ORACLE: *I'm equally comfortable refer-*

encing Nachman of Bratslav and Seka the Swedish Bombshell.

Then the tactics got trickier. The Oracle was told, "O.K. I'm going to ask you a question and if I don't get a response in five seconds I'm going to take it as a yes: Are you Jonathan Safran Foer?" For once, there was no answer.

—Liesl Schillinger

THE STUMP HAIL TO THE REV



Imagine, for a moment, Al Sharpton's Washington. Russell Simmons, the co-founder of Def Jam Records, is in the West Wing, at work on hip-hop outreach. In the Oval Office, the President is talking policy with a group of Harvard professors. "I would bring a perfect mixture of the urban North and the Southern gospel to the White House—a mixture of Russell Simmons and a good plate of fried chicken while I discuss how we get clean water in underdeveloped countries," the Reverend said last week, in his gravelly preacher's voice. "That would be a normal day at the White House under the Sharpton Administration."

"Rev," as the members of his campaign staff call him, is New York's first legitimate Presidential candidate in more than thirty years, despite the fact that he has never won an election. He has been polling at between two and six per cent. "It would probably be a very active social White House," he said, leaning back in his chair, in his campaign headquarters, in midtown, "because my wife comes out of entertainment." Kathy Jordan, the prospective First Lady in question, used to be a backup singer for James Brown. "I would totally leave that up to her. The one person I try not to manage is my wife."

To judge from experience, his would not be a punctual White House. One hour, two hours: despite the super-sized wristwatch he wears, and a talking cell phone ("You have an incoming call"), Rev always seems to be running late. Last month, he even kept the Dalai Lama waiting, at a Town Hall forum; his tardiness may or may not account for the Lama's refusal to grant him an endorse-

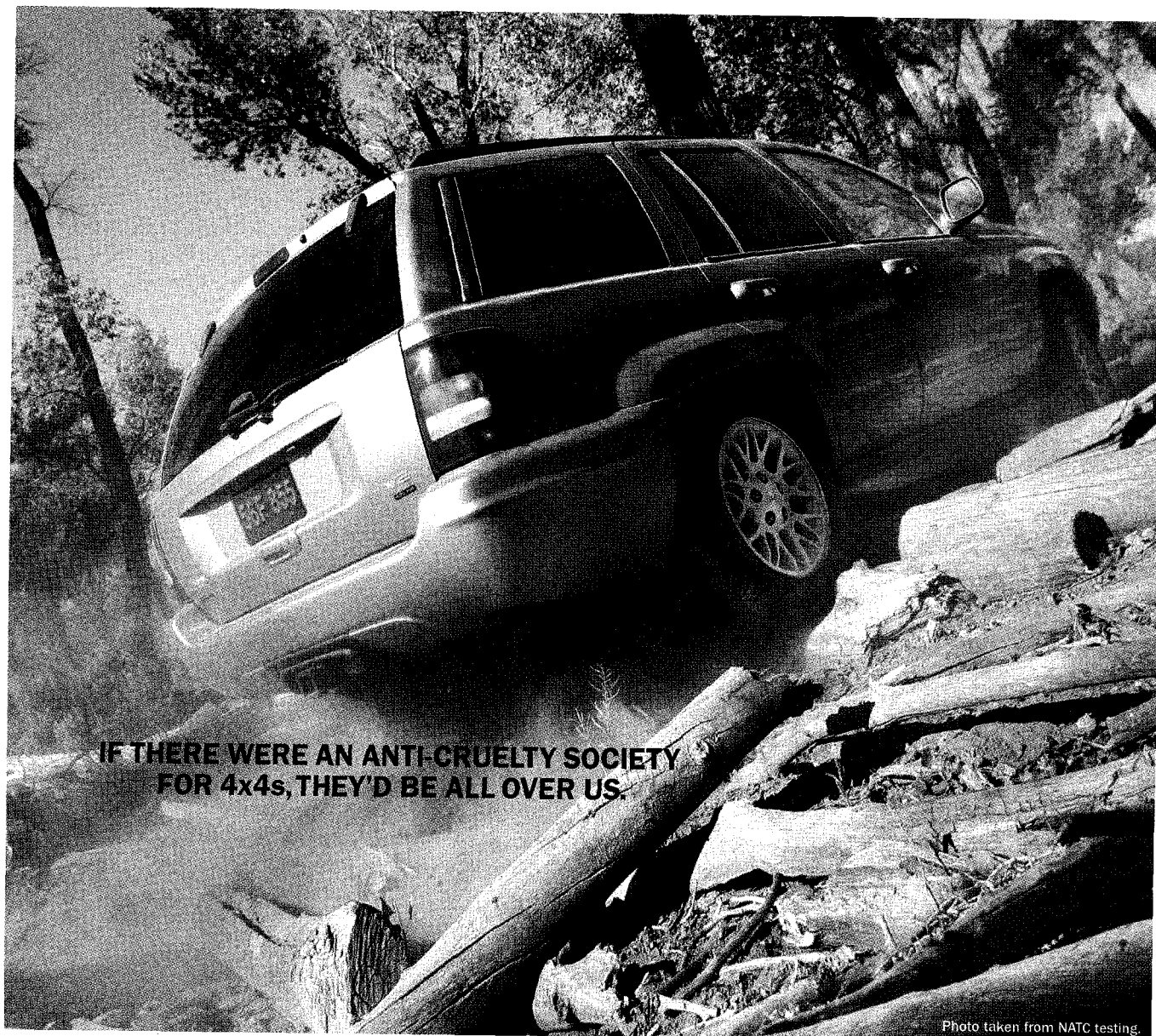
ment. (For Sharpton, all was not lost. "When I was a kid at Tilden High School in New York, I had read about Zen Buddhism and Transcendental Meditation. I even used to chant 'Om,' and it brought me back to those days," he said of the encounter with His Holiness.)

Last week, once he settled in at his headquarters, he took the occasion to critique his fellow-candidates and offer some perspective on the primary campaign, which he likened to the race in 1984, when Jesse Jackson first ran. In both cases, he pointed out, the Democratic Party was in disarray, and was facing a popular, tax-cutting Republican incumbent. "The early front-runners back then," he said, "were a former Vice-President, Walter Mondale; a national hero, John Glenn; and a younger technocrat, Gary Hart." He sat up and took a phone call ("I want to run by this union thing from, like, six-thirty to seven, and then go somewhere nice. . . . I thought we'd go to the reception and then just chill, 'cause we're out of here tomorrow"), then continued, "This is a similar thing. We have a former Vice-Presidential candidate, in Joe Lieberman; we have a national hero, in Wesley Clark; we have a guy who mastered the Internet, a technocrat, in Howard Dean."

So far, Sharpton has been underwhelmed by his opponents. "I thought that they would have much more advantages than they have so far been able to demonstrate," he said, raising his eyebrows. "I remember after the first two or three debates saying, 'I thought these guys would be a little better than this.'"

With his Pentecostal background, Sharpton has been particularly attuned to the candidates' oratorical skills. He recalled a dinner in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he first heard Wesley Clark speak. "I must admit, I was impressed that he was a good speaker," Sharpton said. "He took his jacket off and related to the people real well. He was better on the stump than I would have expected of a general—a military man. He's been good, and I think Kucinich is very passionate." He paused and smirked. "I think that the others have their good days and bad days."

"Let's be honest," he went on. "When I announced I was running, most people thought I'd be ninth in these polls. I remember earlier this year John Edwards was considered the new Bill Clinton,



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and now”—he grinned and shook his head—“he’s tied or behind Al Sharpton.” He added, “I’ve got more white votes in New York than Dean got black votes in Vermont. I don’t think anybody could question that.”

Sharpton doesn’t yet have a Vice-Presidential candidate in mind, though he’d prefer to choose a woman. And



Al Sharpton

what about his Cabinet? So far, he has identified only a few noncontenders. “The first thing I will do is personally escort John Ashcroft out,” he said. “And just this morning I was having breakfast at the same restaurant with Henry Kissinger. In fact, I met with him before I went to the Middle East. We had a two-hour meeting in his office where he gave me his views. And I was telling him this morning that he wasn’t on my shortlist for Secretary of State.”

—Ben McGrath

DEPT. OF CLASSIFICATION NO RESPECT



Even the most devoted slime-mold enthusiasts would probably concede that the professional study of slime molds—more formally known as Eumycetozoans—has some unique draw-

backs. For starters, you must weather polite condescension from the smug arachnid people and from the lording beetle crowd, not to mention the bio-tech and genomics types who hog all the press and the funding. In the trade, your subject is considered a “non-charismatic species” (as opposed to charismatic organisms like koala bears and petunias). You spend weeks camping out in a wet tent, tromping through forests with a magnifying glass, poring over rotting stumps and logs. The worst insult of all, though—in defiance of Linnaean logic—may be that you always end up lumped in with the fungi people.

So when word got out not long ago that two University of Arkansas biology professors had won a multimillion-dollar grant from the National Science Foundation for a project to catalogue hundreds of currently unknown slime-mold species, the worldwide Eumycetozoan community got a little giddy.

Fred Spiegel and Steve Stephenson, the grant winners, were in town the other night, at the Explorers Club, sipping soda and munching on carrots with the other honorees (specialists in catfish, plant bugs, and nightshades). The two men had just flown up from Fayetteville, Arkansas. Stephenson, who is sixty, is tall and deprecating. He has a square jaw and a brushcut, which give him the appearance of an amiable drill sergeant. Spiegel, who is fifty-one, is short and compact and bearded.

“We’re congenial people,” Fred Spiegel said. “Every couple of years, there’s an international slime-mold congress: in England; Madrid; Brussels, Belgium; Beltsville, Maryland. We have a big dinner, we share papers, and there’s always at least one day when we all go out in the field together foraging for slime molds. Some of the really big groups, like the group that studies insects, are too large for this kind of camaraderie.”

“I got into myxomycetes through the back door—mycology and fungi,” Stephenson said. “I have gone to India, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand in search of slime molds. My wife usually comes with me. Slimes are very glorious, but there are a lot of days when it rains and it’s very cold and the wind’s howling and you still have to go out. My daughter, Becky, found her first slime mold when she was four.”

A man in a dinner jacket and cowboy boots approached. He wore a bow tie and pocket handkerchief decorated with little black beetles. He slapped both Spiegel and Stephenson on the back and said, “Ah, the group that my beetles feed on.”

The beetle man soon drifted off to join the catfish guys, and a man in a double-breasted brown chalk-stripe suit came over. It was Jay Walker, the founder of Priceline.com, who was a guest of one of the grant’s sponsors. “I can’t believe you guys are actually here,” Walker said, loudly. “First question.” He paused for effect. “Why slime molds?”

“They are spectacularly beautiful and very diverse creatures,” Spiegel said, and began enumerating their charms.

Walker’s attention seemed to wander, and he suddenly cut Spiegel off: “Slime molds really is a terrible name. You guys have a marketing problem.”

“Slime molds are very misunderstood,” Spiegel said.

“I think both words are bad—‘slime’ and ‘mold,’” Walker went on. “You really have a first name-last name problem.”

Spiegel told Walker about a friend of his who wanted to make a T-shirt that said “SubLIME MOLDS.” Spiegel spelled out the letters across his chest.

“Now, let’s say you wanted to rename them?” Walker said.

“Well, I think the scientific name for slime molds, Eumycetozoans, sounds nice,” Spiegel said.

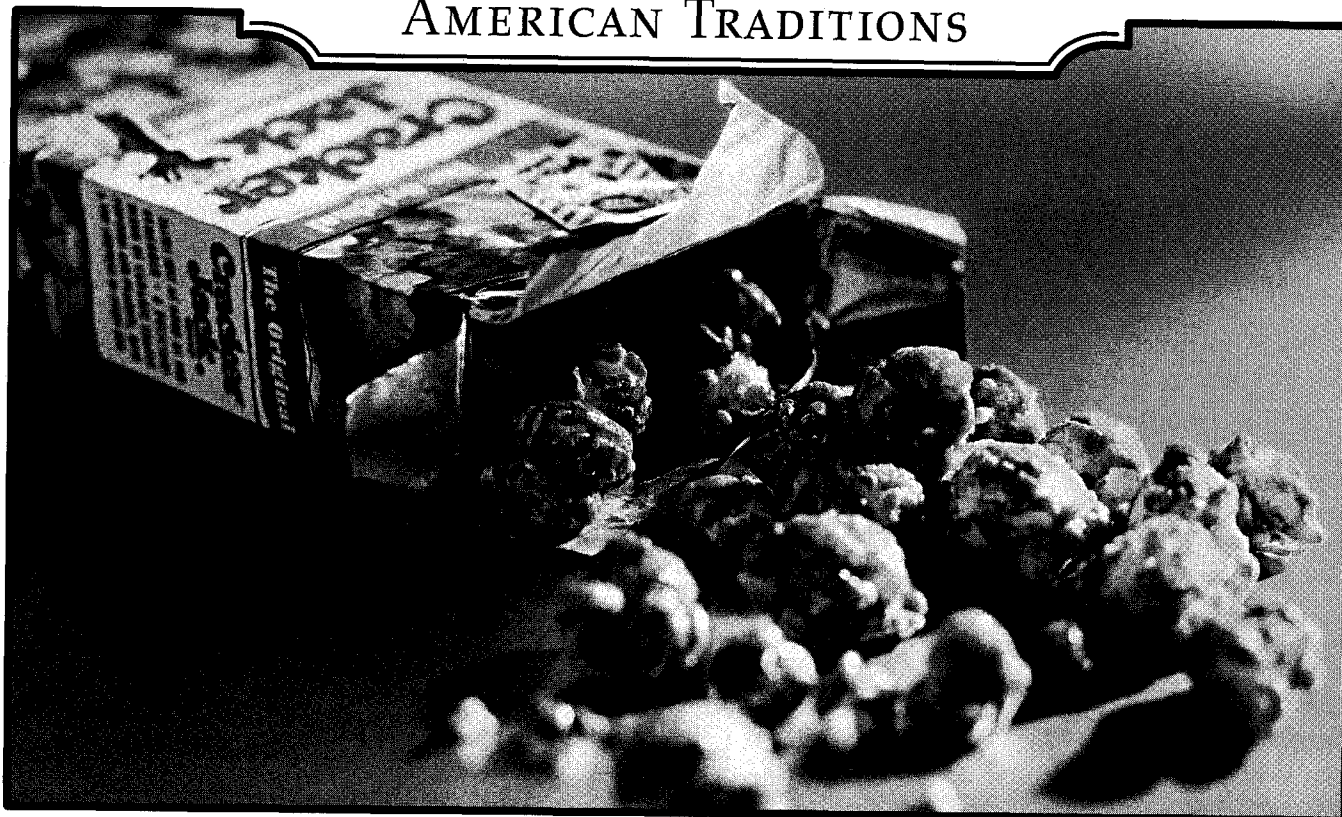
“Eumycetozoans!” Walker looked disgusted. “‘Eumycetozoans’ sounds like something out of ‘Jurassic Park!’ How about an English word instead?”

“We have had some of the most ridiculous name suggestions on earth,” Stephenson said wearily, and he went off to get more Sprite.

Outside, after the awards announcement, Stephenson mentioned that though he had travelled to six continents, this was the first time he’d ever been to New York City. New York was a decent habitat for slime molds, especially Central Park, he allowed, but it wasn’t for him. He prefers places like the South Polar region, which he has visited several times. “The islands down there are pretty isolated—hunks of rock, no trees, windswept—but if you scrounge around you can find some slime molds,” Stephenson said. “I like the places where there aren’t too many people.”

—Field Maloney

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ANCHOR WOMAN

Tina Fey rewrites late-night comedy.

BY VIRGINIA HEFFERNAN

On a Monday afternoon last spring, at a diner in Manhattan, Tina Fey recalled her first days on the job at "Saturday Night Live." She told me, "I'd had my eye on the show forever, the way other kids have their eye on Derek Jeter." As we were talking, a man in his twenties, with wild tufts of dark hair, stopped by our table, which was near the soda fountain. Over the roar of a blender, he shouted to Fey, "Can I tell you that you are amazing? I don't want to interrupt, but you are truly, truly amazing!" Fey thanked him, staring down at her plate.

When her admirer retreated, she grinned. "Most of the time you're too busy to think about it," she told me. "But every now and then you say, 'I work at "Saturday Night Live," and that is so cool.'"

Fey joined the show six years ago, when Lorne Michaels, the creator and executive producer, summoned her from Chicago, where she was working at Second City, the comedy troupe. After twenty years on the air, "S.N.L." had suffered several seasons of declining ratings. Fey was known as a versatile performer with a broad range and a gift for

satire, but Michaels wanted her to write for the show.

She started work in an office on the seventeenth floor of 30 Rockefeller Plaza, NBC's headquarters, which offered a view of the Empire State Building. She missed Chicago, but "S.N.L."'s backstage dynamics inspired her. "In that comfort zone, we say the meanest kind of things," she explained. "If you want to make an audience laugh, you dress a man up like an old lady and push her down the stairs. If you want to make comedy writers laugh, you push an actual old lady down the stairs." In 1999, Michaels invited Fey to become a head writer, and the following year she began performing in sketches and on "Weekend Update."

In addition to being the first woman to hold the title of head writer at "S.N.L.," Fey is also the first female performer to become the face of a show that other female comics, including the original cast members Jane Curtin and Laraine New-



In the "comfort zone" of "Saturday Night Live," Fey notes, "we say the meanest kind of things." Photograph by Chris Floyd.

man, have cited for frat-house hoo-ha. Janeane Garofalo, who was briefly on the show in the mid-nineties (during what she described in the "S.N.L." oral history, "Live from New York," as "the year of fag-bashing and using the words 'bitch' and 'whore' in a sketch"), calls the current period "the Tina Fey regime," and its reforms impress her. "I'm assuming somebody has come in and done an exorcism," she says. Audiences and critics have responded well to Fey's influence. In 2001, Fey and the writing team won a Writers Guild Award for "Saturday Night Live: The 25th Anniversary Special." Last year, the show won an Emmy for outstanding writing, its first in that category since 1989. And this season "S.N.L." is once again attracting more viewers than any other late-night show, including the "Tonight Show" with Jay Leno and "Late Show with David Letterman."

Fey began performing on the show after Michaels saw her onstage in a sketch that she had put together with Rachel Dratch, an "S.N.L." performer, at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre, in Chelsea, and proposed that she audition to co-anchor "Weekend Update" with Jimmy Fallon. Unlike Fey, Fallon—a boisterous, clownish figure—had started out as a standup comic, but they got along well, and viewers liked their priss-and-goof routine. On a Saturday afternoon last spring, Fey, Fallon, and Michael Shoemaker, one of the show's producers, along with the writers Doug Abeles, Charlie Grandy, and Michael Schur, who produces "Update," milled around a table in a conference room, as they do every Saturday afternoon of the television season, for a meeting they refer to as "bagel times." The writers "call down the jokes," reading through a dozen topical one-liners to be delivered during the three-minute segment. "Bagel times" is their last opportunity to convene before the dress rehearsal that precedes the live broadcast, which that week featured Salma Hayek as the host and Christina Aguilera as the musical guest. "Update" is always the last element of the show that the writers work on, and, except for the "feature" interludes, in which guests stop by the news desk—that night Hayek appeared as a buxom sidekick to a Latino

showman—Fey and Fallon don't formally rehearse.

The writers were trying to come up with a joke about the Dixie Chicks, whose lead singer had slighted President Bush. Doug Abeles read the setup: "While in London on Thursday, the Dixie Chicks angered country-music fans when lead singer Natalie Maines told the audience, 'Just so you know, we're ashamed that the President of the United States is from Texas.'" Fey squinted, as if detecting a quip in the distance. She is slight, with bright eyes, fine features, and thick brown hair. A white scar runs up her left cheek. (She has had the scar since childhood but she hates to discuss it.) Wearing a shabby green cardigan, Levi's, and sneakers, she was eating a bagel out of which she had scooped most of the soft bread. "We apologize," she suddenly declared. "We forgot that our entire fan base were hillbillies and idiots." Everyone chuckled except Shoemaker, who pointed out that Dixie Chicks fans were people like his wife. Fey agreed, without apology, and the group moved on to a joke about a man who swallowed a diamond ring in order to ask his proctologist to marry him.

Fey peered at a monitor that showed performers rehearsing the night's routines in a studio downstairs. Hayek was swooning in a mock Mexican soap opera. Fey grimaced. "That sketch is in peril," she said. A premise for another joke came up. A summer camp in northern Virginia trains preteen girls to be models, someone explained; they learn makeup, hair, and runway techniques. At the end of the summer, the writers proposed, the camp would donate the best little model to... someone. Tommy Lee? Kid Rock? Everyone looked stumped.

Fallon abruptly turned to me. "Name someone who dates supermodels," he commanded. Then he bellowed, "Give me five names! Give me five!"

"Rod Stewart?" I said.

No one laughed except Fey, who giggled happily.

"Do you really think that's funny?" Fallon asked, turning to her.

"Nah," she said. "I'm just trying to make her feel better."

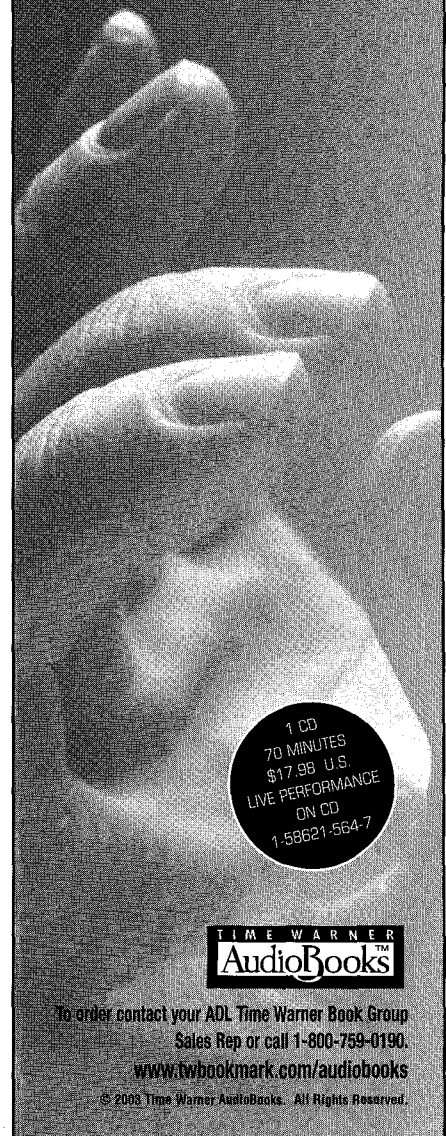
The other writers and performers defer to Fey. "If she laughs, everyone's laughing," Fallon told me. Fey writes

DAVID SEDARIS

SEDARIS

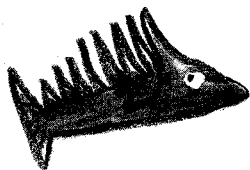
LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL

At David Sedaris' sold out performance at Carnegie Hall on Oct. 22, 2002, he debuted five new stories. Hear them first on this CD.



two comedy sketches each week, and runs one of two pivotal and often ego-bruising “rewrite tables” every Thursday. (Dennis McNicholas, the show’s other head writer, runs the other table.) And she is one of a small group of writers and producers who decide which sketches will air, as well as which writers get to join the staff. During the past few seasons, Fey has seen to it that the female performers (Amy Poehler, Rachel Dratch, and Maya Rudolph) play recurring, center-stage parts. Poehler and Dratch also write prolifically, often in collaboration with the staff writers Emily Spivey and Paula Pell. (Only three of the show’s twenty full-time writers are women, but two of them, Fey and Pell, have senior positions.) Dratch told me, “I love writing with Tina, but I’m always so self-conscious.” Poehler said, “Tina likes to be at the top of the mountain, keeping an eye on things.” And yet, at the read-through, at least in my presence, Fey was considerate and accessible. She solicited a range of opinions, paid earnest compliments, and showed political convictions about international law and the consequences of jingoism. (America’s current troubles make Fey miss the previous Administration: “The Clinton years were the best of times,” she told me. “Because there was a nonviolent, giant, sexy scandal. And I long for a return to those times every day.”) Only every now and then did she turn to a writer and say something like “Jesus, how long did it take you to come up with *that*?”

Still searching for a punch line about the Dixie Chicks, Schur suggested that an analogy might work. Abeles, a friendly, lanky man in his late thirties, stepped up. “No one has alienated their fan base this much since Jenna Jameson stopped doing anal,” he offered. People laughed politely, and someone hooted; everyone knew the line would stall at the department of Standards and Practices. Fey, who seemed to have momentarily lost interest, skimmed an article in the *Post*. (She gets most of her news from CNN and a packet of newspaper clips that the show’s staff prepares for her.) Soon afterward, the meeting adjourned, and Fey headed downstairs to the run-through of the sketches. Schur appointed Abeles



and Grandy to solve the Dixie Chicks puzzle by dress rehearsal. Later, no one could say who came up with the punch line, but at airtime it ran: “If you’d like to hear more of what Natalie Maines has to say, check out the new government wiretap on all of her phones.” The audience seemed to like it.

Fey’s first comedy job was as the anonymous author of a column in the *Acorn*, the Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, high-school newspaper. She was born in Upper Darby, a middle-class suburb of Philadelphia, in May, 1970, when it was home to many Greek- and Italian-Americans. Fey’s mother is Greek-American and her father is German-Scottish, but she’s wary of claiming an ethnic identity. “I’ve said a few things about being Greek, and now every Greek organization wants to adopt me,” Fey told me. She admired her parents: her father for his integrity and his versatility (he has worked as a paramedic, a grant writer, and a mystery novelist) and her mother—a homemaker who spent her evenings playing poker—for her wit. She has one sibling, an older brother, Peter, who is a Web-site editor at QVC, the home-shopping network. As children, they did comedy routines together. Peter remembers a drawing that Tina made when she was about seven: it showed people walking down the street holding hands with wedges of Swiss cheese, and the caption read, “What a friend we have in cheeses!”

Fey wrote her high-school column as “the Colonel”—an acorn pun. She says that the column was “about school policy and teachers. I remember I got busted because I was trying to say that something would ‘go down in the annals of history,’ but it was a double-entendre with ‘anal’ and I didn’t get away with it.” Her sense of humor, however, didn’t make her cool. Instead, she was a straight-A student who packed her schedule with extracurricular activities, including the newspaper and choir. She has a soft but precise singing voice.

High-school social dynamics still fascinate Fey, who has written a screenplay about teen-agers for Lorne Michaels’ Broadway Video Motion Pictures, whose offices are at Paramount

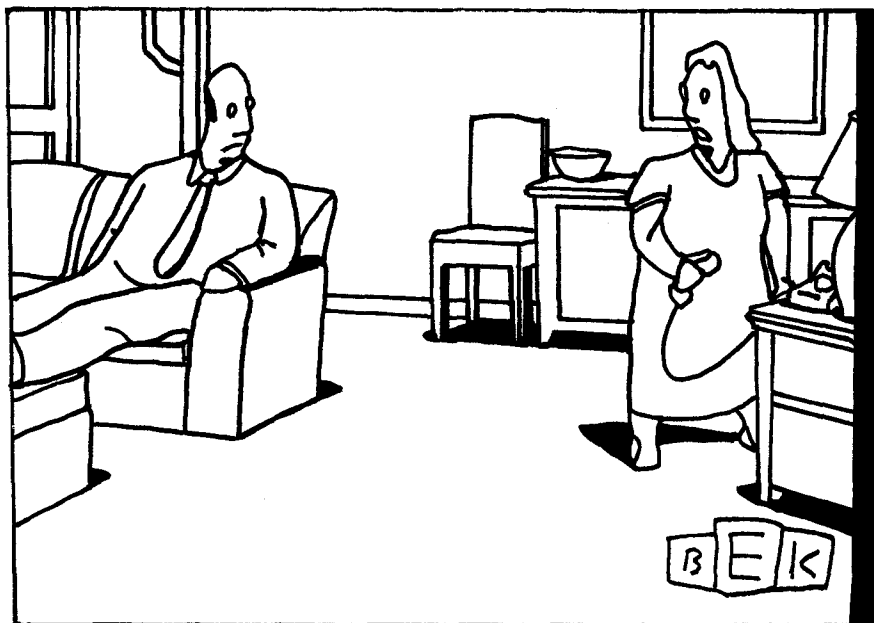
Pictures. Currently in production in Toronto (starring Lindsay Lohan and directed by Mark S. Waters, both of “Freaky Friday”), Fey’s “Mean Girls” tells the story of a girl named Cady, who, having been home-schooled, enters her junior year in a public high school knowing nothing about cliques, makeup, dating, dieting, lying to her parents, or betraying her friends. She learns. The movie is based on a parenting book called “Queen Bees & Wannabes,” by Rosalind Wiseman; Fey was impressed by Wiseman’s characterization of girls’ inhumanity to girls. “Girls are capable of spending a lot of time with someone and hating them,” Fey explained to me.

This is a topic that she knows something about. “I was a mean girl,” she told me, recalling that she used to ridicule wayward classmates, reserving particular scorn for kids who drank, cut school, overdressed, or slept around. She has a hard time explaining her motives—“It’s a defense mechanism”—but her hostility persisted after she enrolled at the University of Virginia. “When I was eighteen or nineteen, that was all that I was, caustic,” she says. She started out as an English major but switched to theatre and settled into the life of a “drama geek.” On a campus renowned for keg parties, she refused to drink. In her second year, she remained in student housing, even though most of her classmates moved off campus; she preferred to be close to Culbreth, the university’s theatre. “I used to do a monologue from a one-act play by Tennessee Williams called ‘This Property Is Condemned,’” Fey told me. “And, I have to say, I was pretty good.” In 1992, her last year of college, she played Sally Bowles in “Cabaret.”

After graduation, Fey moved to Chicago; Second City’s reputation as an improv Mecca had piqued her interest, because, as she told me, “I knew it was where a lot of ‘S.N.L.’ people had started.” She hung around acting workshops and, at one point, held a job as the child-care registrar at the Y.M.C.A. before she was invited to join the troupe, in 1994. Her work was eclectic in form: monologues, sketches, one-acts. That same year, she met Jeff Richmond, a piano player at an improv school, who would later become her husband. Rich-

mond is a levelheaded Ohioan, whose humor is more antic than cutting, and Fey believes that he is good for her character. Richmond described his first glimpse of Fey, whom he saw doing improv: "I don't want to say she was funny 'for a woman,' but there were so many talented men there at the time, and then suddenly there was Tina, who was so funny—and she was at home with all those boys on the stage." (Three years after Fey left Chicago, Richmond joined her in New York, where—on his own merits, the people at "S.N.L." take care to point out—he, too, was eventually hired by the show, to compose music for sketches.) In June of 1997, at the suggestion of Adam McKay, a former Second City player who was then the head writer at "S.N.L.," Fey sent some scripts to Lorne Michaels. In August, Michaels called her to New York. Though she had applied for the job, she had some qualms about taking it. She was twenty-seven, and she was finally doing what she loved: improvisational comedy, eight shows a week. She told Amy Poehler, whom she knew from the Chicago comedy scene, that she dreaded leaving Second City and moving away from Richmond. Poehler asked her how much money she would be making in New York. When Fey named the figure, Poehler laughed. "I think you should take the job," she said.

The cast members of "Saturday Night Live" are recruited from standup acts and from three comedy farm teams that tend to define the comedians they produce. The writer-performers from Second City (Dan Aykroyd, John Belushi, Bill Murray, Gilda Radner, Rachel Dratch, Amy Poehler, Horatio Sanz) are known for their aesthetic perfectionism. "They're tangled up in their own integrity," as Fey puts it. The performers who come from the Groundlings, an improv troupe in Los Angeles (Laraine Newman, Chris Farley, Will Ferrell, Julia Sweeney, Maya Rudolph, Chris Kattan), create vivid and eccentric characters. The writers who worked at the *Harvard Lampoon* (Dennis McNicholas, Michael Schur, Conan O'Brien) tend to emphasize the conceptual premise of a sketch. While each of the fifteen performers on "S.N.L." is expected to write (or risk getting no parts), some take to it more naturally than others. Fey



"We're going out with Joe and Rita next Tuesday. They want to know whether we want to talk about Tuscany or carbs."

characterizes certain kinds of Groundlings jokes, and especially *Harvard Lampoon* humor, as peculiarly male, founded in boyhood fantasies. "She's Chicago," Jimmy Fallon explains. "Dennis is Harvard. She'd do more jokes about having sex with a hobo, and he'd do more jokes about robots and sharks." Fey has contributed to a mostly friendly rivalry between the competing sensibilities, conceding that "the *Lampoon* people are very smart, obviously—they're helpful to have around."

Fey herself tinkers with a line's inflections and implications in a way that befits a Second City alumna. The details of human behavior—minor notes of pomposity, say, in apparently self-effacing speech—make her laugh, and she knows how to introduce those notes into sketches. She also knows how to update existing comic conceits subtly: when Billy Crystal reprised his Fernando character for the show's twenty-fifth-anniversary broadcast, in 1999, Fey surprised longtime staff members by learning the Fernando voice ("You look mahvellous") and writing jokes that suited it.

On "Update" she periodically slides into the kind of easy world-weariness that is associated with Jan Hooks, who is one of the former cast members that

Fey most admires. At other times, she uses broad self-mockery and caricature, which recalls Gilda Radner's work, although when Fey claims in jokes that she can't get a date she's hard to believe. In fact, she may be alone among contemporary female comics in appearing, above all, distant and aloof—an object of desire.

Gender has been Fey's ace since she arrived at "S.N.L."—one recent sketch dramatized the barbarism of bikini waxing, and another cast Barbie as a fading beauty living with a gay man in Southern California—and she has spoofed stereotypes of women while taking on formerly neglected subjects, such as infertility, sexual abuse, and plastic surgery. When a male staff member asked Fey, who had just written a sketch that imagined a world in which old black ladies were Hollywood trophy wives, if her sketches were "anti-woman," she told him that the show's business was to make fun of people, and if it didn't make fun of women the female performers would have no parts to play. Now she has found a way of playing sexism for laughs, of telling audiences, "I can say this, but you can't."

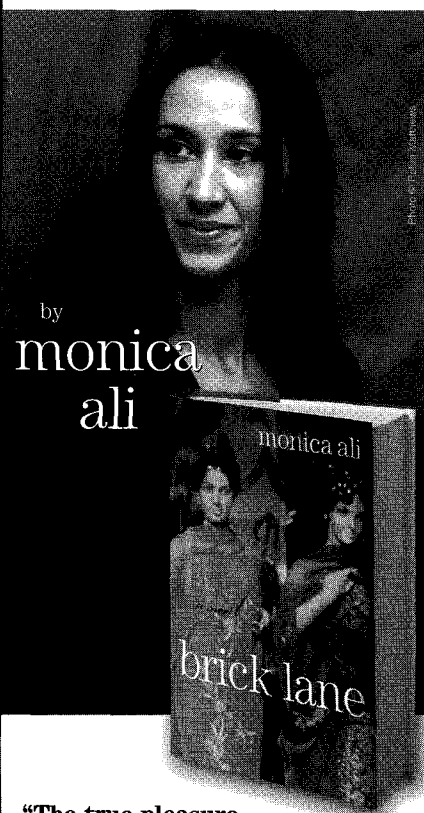
Although Fey is credited with bringing moral authority to the set—the black-rimmed glasses she wears on "Update"

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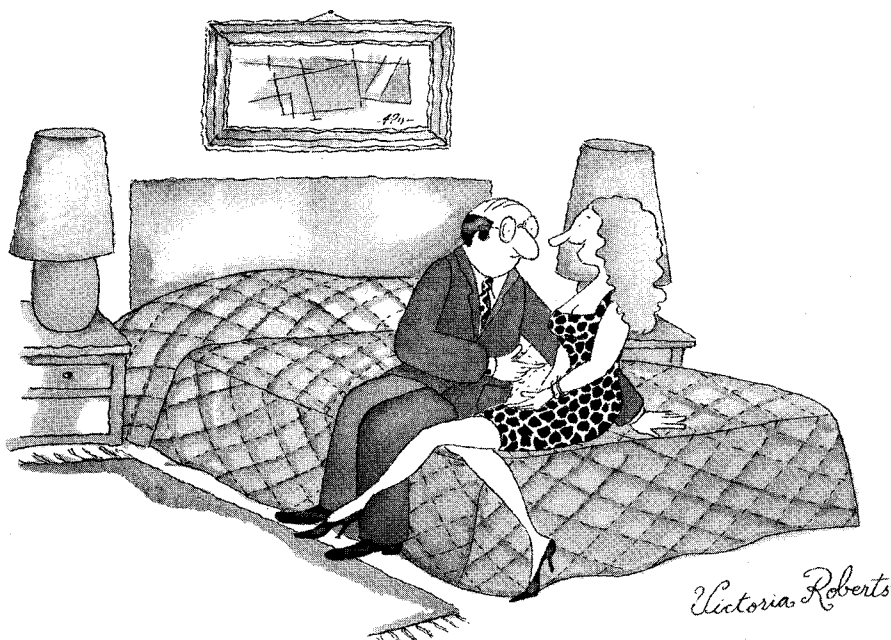
add to this impression—she has also made the show more lewd. Raw humor has long been a part of Fey's repertoire. (She once wrote a piece for a workshop in Chicago that featured Catherine the Great complaining about life's inequity: "You can be a murderous tyrant and the world will remember you fondly. But fuck one horse and you're a horse-fucker for all eternity.") And since she became a head writer the words "whore" and "bitch" have flourished on the show. (After the invasion of Afghanistan, she announced on "Week-end Update," "For the first time in more than two years, women took off their veils and walked freely in the streets. Those whores.") Jokes have also become more graphic. "My mom had me when she was forty," Fey said in a personal aside one night on "Update." "This was back in the seventies, when the only 'fertility aid' was Harveys Bristol Cream. So waiting is just a risk that I'm gonna have to take. And I don't think I could do fertility drugs, because, to me, six half-pound translucent babies is not a miracle—it's gross." On another show, she told the audience, "Female inmates in the United States have been victims of sexual misconduct by corrections employees in every state except Minnesota. So, ladies, if you wanna rob a bank but you don't want your cooter poked, head to beautiful Minnesota, land of ten thousand lakes."

Male comics, particularly Bill Murray, Steve Martin, and Colin Quinn, have influenced her, especially with their comic rants—extended monologues shouted straight at the camera. On "Update," Fey frequently rants about political topics, as in:

President Bush was criticized this week for not having a clear stance on the Middle East crisis. You know what? Good. The only people with a very clear stance on the Middle East are the crazy people in the Middle East. I've had it with all of them. Yasir Arafat? Don't talk to us in English and say, "I agree to a ceasefire," and then turn around in Arabic and be like, "Hassan, let's do this." O.K.? We're onto you. We've got like two bilingual C.I.A. guys now. We know what you're saying.

And Sharon? When you're storming West Bank towns and bulldozing people's homes? Try not to look like ya love it. 'Cause ya kinda look like ya love it.

"What destroys comedy writers," Lorne Michaels told me, "is when they cling to something." Fey has won his favor because she will drop ideas that have run dry, such as her once-popular parody of "The View," ABC's morning talk show, which featured the catchphrase "I'm a loy-ya." She also risks new voices. Among these is her "Old French Whore!," a sketch involving haggard prostitutes who tell stories of revolting, drug-addled nights. The prostitutes are paired on a game show with clean-living Americans, who have to prop up their dissipated, despairing partners. Eventu-



Victoria Roberts

"You're just troubled enough, Herbert. I like that in a man."

ally, one of the Americans says, "I think my whore is dead."

Offstage, Fey is playful but proper. On the air, her delivery is like a lash—"Hey, kids, it's the great women of U.S. history! Collect all ten!" or "This is the hardest Bush has worked since that time he tried to walk home from Mardi Gras"—followed by a self-deprecating smile. Nearly all Fey's colleagues mentioned her ability to be mean and disarming at the same time. I heard her humor variously described as "hard-edged," "vicious," and "cruel." Shoemaker told me, "The fight you have in your head with someone, that you're never really going to have? ... I think she plans one every day."

While I was sitting with Fey one afternoon in a café on Broadway, she admitted that she chronically prepares for the worst, in part by keeping zingers close at hand. But it's excessive, she realized: "No one's really coming at you." She had been reflecting on current events, and I expected to hear her customary tartness, but her voice faltered, and tears slipped down her cheeks. "In New York you get to have little moments of fear every day now," she said. "Right after September 11th, I thought, We got to get out of here. My dad talked to me about how important it was to go back to work. But it has not been easy. I remember I was writing jokes in my dressing room one Friday. I looked up and there was a guy on MSNBC saying, 'Anthrax has been found at 30 Rockefeller Center.' And I thought, I'm fucking in 30 Rockefeller Center. Thirty. Not even 45 Rockefeller Center. You do get the irrational feeling that they are specifically coming for you. And I got up, got my coat, walked out of the building, and I just kept walking. I was very upset. That night, I got a call from Lorne, and he said I was the only person who hadn't come back."

Others at "S.N.L." didn't know how to respond. "I do have to say that it changed the way we thought about her," Shoemaker said. "That was the first sign of fragility." Fey told me that she has been systematically imagining—and rehearsing—a knockdown fight with terrorists. She entered a course of psychodrama, a form of therapy that uses acting techniques to banish sadness, anger, and

fear. In sessions, she said, she faces down imaginary terrorists, sometimes represented by chairs. She also punches a pillow that stands in for President Bush. Later, she surprised me again by mentioning that she had once been the victim of a violent street crime.

Her anxiety has shaped her work. On a show in 2001, Fey said, "On Monday, Attorney General John Ashcroft issued a terrorism warning, asking all Americans to be on high alert this week. ... I think I speak for all Americans when I say, 'Bitch, I can't be any more alert than I already am. O.K.?' I'm opening my mail with salad tongs. I take my passport in the shower with me. I am watching so much CNN I am having sex dreams about Wolf Blitzer."

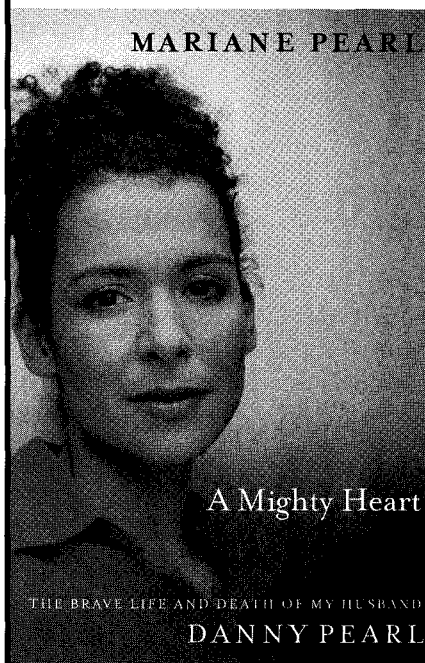
Another day, when Fey and I were walking around her neighborhood, on the Upper West Side, a man passing us spat on the sidewalk. When she turned to confront him, he looked up innocently. "Hey, dude!" she shouted. "Get a Kleenex!" The man slunk off in shame, as Fey, shaking her head in disgust, kept complaining. As in her college days, she looks down on misbehavior. "She's pretty monastic at times," Amy Poehler told me. "She's not the first girl to belly-flop into the pool at the pool party. She watches everybody else's flops and then writes a play about it." Fey goes out with the cast after the show, but she is self-conscious at parties and careful not to embarrass herself. She's meticulous about her diet, too. She lost thirty pounds in the year before she went on camera for "Weekend Update," and she now works out with a trainer and counts the point value of each meal according to the Weight Watchers system. (Earlier this year, *People* included her in its annual list of most beautiful people. "Don't mention it," she told me. "Ride it out.")

Fey's rigidity may be connected to her tendency to see the world in stark moral terms. ("She has very definite opinions as to what should be done about terrorists," Shoemaker said.) At work, Fey tempers her hard-line reputation by playing the nerd—by pretending that she's unfamiliar with, rather than disdainful of, the ways of the less temperate. Jeff Richmond told me, "I don't know if she's judgmental—maybe 'fascinated.' Nah, 'judgmental' is the right word." He went on, "She says, 'Why do

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people have to drink too much?' I've heard that in reference to—well, me." She and Richmond, who were married in a Greek Orthodox ceremony in 2001, bought a duplex at the top of a building off Amsterdam Avenue earlier this year. A fluke electrical fire and water from the fire hoses damaged it in the spring, but it has since been fixed up and painted chartreuse, although there's still not much furniture, besides a piano and an old school table. During her time off, Fey often sews or bakes cookies. "For some reason, I believed Nancy Reagan," she explained. "I believed that what she said, I should do."

Lorne Michaels waves off Fey's classification of herself as a square, and compares it to the tendency of the show's first cast to claim they were rebels. "This cast is young. They're ambitious. They pride themselves on being less self-destructive," he said. "But we didn't pride ourselves on being self-destructive in the seventies. People were experimenting with freedom. The spirit then was more frater-

nal than maternal." He added, "I think that being geeky is just another way of being Holden Caulfield or the Graduate. Comedy people are always outsiders."

On October 13, 1979, Steve Martin hosted the season premiere of "Saturday Night Live"—he played the Pope, an aspiring male model, and Carole King's boyfriend—and nearly half of all television viewers in America tuned in. The show can never expect to do so well again; last season, on average, its share was about thirteen per cent. Still, NBC is pleased: the show rivalled its ratings from seven years ago, when the average viewer had only forty-one channels to choose from. Today, the average is more than a hundred channels per household, and several of the cable stations, especially Comedy Central and HBO, have strong comedy lineups.

This fall, Fey is writing and performing as usual. Earlier this month, she appeared in a parody of "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy." Fey, dressed in pink,

played a kittenish suburbanite whose life was made over by no-nonsense lesbians. On "Update," she seconded Rush Limbaugh's claim that Donovan McNabb, the Philadelphia Eagles quarterback, was praised too highly for his performance because he is black. She said, "Finally, someone has the guts to say what the liberal media doesn't want you to know: black people are not good at sports." She also flies to Toronto for a few days each week to work on the set of "Mean Girls." Having spent the summer on Fire Island rewriting the screenplay, she said she was happy to be "back in an environment of comedy snobbery," because "it's better for you."

Lorne Michaels told me, "There's a group of people who feel Tina can do no wrong in my eyes. But that's because she's just wrong less often than other people." Michaels went on in this vein for a few minutes, and then abruptly paused to ask a question that nearly everyone I had spoken to about Fey had asked: "What does she say about me?" ♦

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WHAT WOULD JESUS TEST-DRIVE?

BY JESSE LICHTENSTEIN

Thirty-three percent of the public thought Jesus would not drive a sport utility vehicle, while 29 percent thought he would, 31 percent offered no opinion and 7 percent volunteered the reply that he would not drive, but walk.

—*The Times*, referring to a poll by the Pew Research Center and the Pew Forum.

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SALES ASSOCIATE: And here's our deluxe S.U.V., the Escalade. Comes in sable black, protective cladding, onboard DVD Navigation System, seventeen-inch seven-spoke cast-aluminum wheels.

JESUS: It catches the eye.

SALES ASSOCIATE: All the luxury and craftsmanship you've come to expect from a Cadillac, but with the physical road presence to exceed all S.U.V. vehicles in its class. Go ahead, hop in.

JESUS: Nice.

SALES ASSOCIATE: Ten-way power adjusting seats with power lumbar support and side bolsters. Let's drive.

JESUS: All right. I notice the windows are really dark.

SALES ASSOCIATE: Full tint job. Most of our high-profile clients demand it, so we keep it on the floor model.

JESUS: Gotcha. It handles really well.

SALES ASSOCIATE: Deceptively smooth.

JESUS: O.K., let's say I'm just curious: could I switch the wheels for twenty-two-inch chrome Momos and add a brushed billet grille, Corsa exhaust tips, Kicker Solo-Baric L7 subs, and a Magna Charger with a 4.5-p.s.i. boost?

SALES ASSOCIATE: Piece of cake.

JESUS: What's the gas mileage?

SALES ASSOCIATE: [*snickers*] Sorry? Didn't catch that.

JESUS: I'm just messing with you.

Biegler Honda and Mitsubishi

SALES ASSOCIATE: Listen to that—almost silent.

JESUS: Amazing! It sounds more like a refrigerator than a car. It's eerie.

SALES ASSOCIATE: On these hybrids,

the gasoline engine doesn't kick in until you top twenty-two m.p.h.

JESUS: There it goes, I hear it. That's fascinating.

SALES ASSOCIATE: Take a left here.

JESUS: So, honestly, how many miles per gallon are we talking about?

SALES ASSOCIATE: In town, you'll get about sixty m.p.g.s. On the freeway, I can get you sixty-six.

JESUS: Sixty-six?! Really?

SALES ASSOCIATE: I know, it's a marvel. They should have had these years ago. Goodbye, staggering gas prices. So long, dependence on foreign oil cartels. And there's the environmental aspect—you feel a little better about yourself at the end of the day.

JESUS: So how fast can it go?

SALES ASSOCIATE: It's perfectly adequate for freeway speeds. You aren't going to be able to push eighty-five up a mountain pass with a U-Haul in the back, but for most people that's not a problem.

JESUS: Oh. So it's a little weak, then.

SALES ASSOCIATE: You really won't notice it much in your everyday life.

JESUS: What if I want to peel out at a stoplight?

SALES ASSOCIATE: Well, it starts out with the electric motor, so . . .

JESUS: I see. Suppose some kid in a Corvette cuts me off, then floors it and starts to pull away?

SALES ASSOCIATE: Well, I mean . . .

JESUS: Because it sounds like you're trying to sell me a shiny new golf cart.

Riverside Hummer

SALES ASSOCIATE: How's it feel?

JESUS: Powerful.

SALES ASSOCIATE: What did I tell you—it's a rush. It's like crack cocaine.

JESUS: It really is a remarkable feeling, being this high up.

SALES ASSOCIATE: Like riding a bull. That's a seriously mean *toro* beneath you, amigo. Who says size doesn't matter, eh?

JESUS: It's really big.

SALES ASSOCIATE: You know, I envy you. I remember my first drive—I knew I could never go back. I've got two of these mothers at home now, Xena the Warrior and Sharon. As in Stone. Gotta take turns with them or they get jealous.

JESUS: I don't know. I don't think it would fit in my garage.

SALES ASSOCIATE: Well, mortgage rates these days are rock bottom. A lot of my customers are refinancing and using the money to fix up the garage, add a deck, a Jacuzzi, a shooting range, what have you. So you could remodel the whole garage, have more space for your tools—you said you were a carpenter?

JESUS: Mostly finish work. Cabinets.

SALES ASSOCIATE: Well, you can haul a pretty pile of cabinets in the back of this baby. And cabinets ain't everything. Let me ask you this: Are you married?

JESUS: No.

SALES ASSOCIATE: Correct answer. Now, take a look at me. Am I a handsome man?

JESUS: Um . . .

SALES ASSOCIATE: Hey, tell it like it is—I'm no movie star, I know that. But let me ask you this: How many women did I pick up in Xena last week alone?

JESUS: Come again?

SALES ASSOCIATE: I'm not talking about a friendly ride around the block. I'm not talking about "let me drop you off at your pedicure appointment." The question is: How many women did I spread like Philadelphia cream cheese in the back of my H2 last week?

JESUS: Um, look . . .

SALES ASSOCIATE: Go on, how many?

JESUS: I really couldn't . . .

SALES ASSOCIATE: How many?

JESUS: I have no idea. Two? Three?

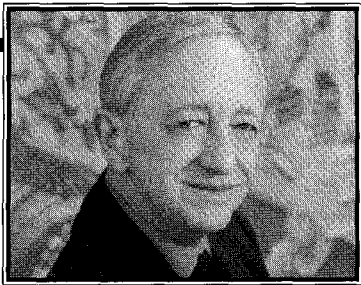
SALES ASSOCIATE: Unh-unh.

JESUS: Ten?

SALES ASSOCIATE: Please. Now you're pissing on my parade. Five. Five! In one week! And that's me. Now, take you. You've got the whole retro-fashion thing going for you—the sandal thing, the beard. Unusual for a man commanding six tons of steel, you follow? Keeps 'em guessing. And let me ask you this: Ever wondered what a Volkswagen Beetle sounds like as it's crushed to scrap metal beneath your front axle?

JESUS: Not really . . .

SALES ASSOCIATE: Like angels on high, amigo. Angels rejoicing on high. ♦



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SHIPWRECK

"A dazzling novel of manners, class, sex, and art... Enthralling... It will pin readers to their chairs right up to the final page."

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—Joyce Cohen, *People*

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RECOLLECTIONS

TRICKED

We always thought there was something odd about the neighbors.

BY DAVID SEDARIS

When my family first moved to North Carolina, we lived in a rented house three blocks from the school where I would begin the third grade. My mother made friends with one of the neighbors, but one seemed enough for her. Within a year we would move again, and, as she explained, there wasn't much point in getting too close to people we would have to say goodbye to. Our next house was less than a mile away, and the short journey would hardly merit tears, or even goodbyes, for that matter. It was more of a "see you later" situation, but still I adopted my mother's attitude, as it allowed me to pretend that not making friends was a conscious choice. I could if I wanted to. It just wasn't the right time.

Back in New York State, we had lived in the country, with no sidewalks or street lights; you could leave the house and still be alone. But here, when you looked out the window, you saw other houses, and people inside those houses. I hoped that in walking around after dark I might witness a murder, but for the most part our neighbors just sat in their living rooms, watching TV. The only place that seemed truly different was owned by a man named, I think, Mr. Tomkey, who did not believe in television. This was told to us by our mother's friend, who dropped by one afternoon with a basketful of okra. The woman did not editorialize—rather, she just presented her information, leaving her listener to make of it what she might. Had my mother said, "That's the craziest thing I've ever heard in my life," I assume that the friend would have agreed, and had she said, "Three cheers for Mr. Tomkey," she likely would have agreed as well. It was a kind of test, as was the okra.

To say that you did not believe in television was different from saying that you did not care for it. Belief implied that television had a master plan, and

that you were against it. It also suggested that you thought too much. When my mother reported that Mr. Tomkey did not believe in television, my father said, "Well, good for him. I don't know that I believe in it, either."

"That's exactly how I feel," my mother said, and then my parents watched the news, and whatever came on after the news.

Word spread that Mr. Tomkey did not own a television, and you began hearing that, while this was all very well and good, it was unfair of him to inflict his beliefs upon others, specifically his innocent wife and children. Just as the blind man develops a keener sense of hearing, it was speculated that the family must somehow compensate for their loss. "Maybe they read," my mother's friend said. "Maybe they listen to the radio, but you can bet your boots they're doing *something*."

I wanted to know what this something was, and so I began peering through the Tomkeys' windows. During the day, I'd stand across the street from their house, acting as though I were waiting for someone, and at night, when the view was better and I had less chance of being discovered, I would creep into their yard and hide in the bushes beside their fence.

Because they had no TV, the Tomkeys were forced to talk during dinner. They had no idea how puny their lives were, and so they were not shamed that a camera would have found them uninteresting. They did not know what attractive was, or what dinner was supposed to look like, or even what time people were supposed to eat. Sometimes they wouldn't sit down until eight o'clock, long after everyone else had finished doing the dishes. During the meal, Mr. Tomkey would occasionally pound the table and point at his children with a fork, but the moment he finished every-

one would start laughing. I got the idea that he was imitating someone else, and wondered if he spied on us while we were eating.

When fall arrived and school began, I saw the Tomkey children marching up the hill with paper sacks in their hands. The son was one grade lower than me, and the daughter was a grade higher. We never spoke, but I'd pass them in the halls from time to time and attempt to view the world through their eyes. What must it be like to be so ignorant and alone? Could a normal person even imagine it? Staring at an Elmer Fudd lunchbox, I tried to divorce myself from everything I already knew: Elmer's inability to pronounce the letter "R," his constant pursuit of an intelligent and considerably more famous rabbit. I tried to think of him as just a drawing, but it was impossible to separate him from his celebrity.

One day in class, a boy named William began to write a wrong answer on the blackboard and our teacher flailed her arms, saying, "Warning, Will. Danger, danger." Her voice was synthetic and void of emotion, and we laughed, knowing she was imitating the robot in a weekly show about a family who lived in outer space. The Tomkeys, though, would have thought she was having a heart attack. It occurred to me that they needed a guide, someone who could accompany them through the course of an average day and point out all the things they were unable to understand. I could have done it on weekends, but friendship would have taken away their mystery, and interfered with the good feeling I got from pitying them. So I kept my distance.

In early October, the Tomkeys bought a boat, and everyone seemed greatly relieved, especially my mother's friend, who noted that the motor was definitely secondhand. It was reported that Mr. Tomkey's father-in-law owned a house on the lake, and had invited the

family to use it whenever they liked. This explained why they were gone all weekend, but it did not make their absences any easier to bear. I felt as if my favorite show had been cancelled.

Halloween fell on a Saturday that year, and by the time my mother took us to the store all the good costumes were gone. My sisters dressed as witches and I went as a hobo. I'd looked forward to

to discover the entire Tomkey family on our front stoop. The parents looked as they always had, but the son and daughter were dressed in costumes—she as a ballerina and he as some kind of rodent with terry-cloth ears and a tail made from what looked to be an extension cord. It seemed they had spent the previous evening isolated at the lake, and had missed the opportunity to observe

Halloween. "So, well, I guess we're trick-or-treating *now*, if that's O.K.," Mr. Tomkey said.

I attributed their behavior to the fact that they didn't have a TV, but television didn't teach you everything. Asking for candy on Halloween was called trick-or-treating, but asking for candy on November 1st was called begging, and it made people uncomfortable. This was one of the things you were supposed to learn simply by being alive, and it angered me that the Tomkeys did not understand it.

"Why, of course it's not too late," my mother said. "Kids, why don't you . . . run and get . . . the candy."

"But the candy is gone," my sister Gretchen said.

"You gave it away last night."

"Not *that* candy," my mother said. "The other candy. Why don't you run and go get it?"

"You mean *our* candy?" Lisa said. "The candy that we *earned*?"

This was exactly what our mother was talking about, but she didn't want to say this in front of the Tomkeys. In order to spare their feelings, she wanted them to believe that we always kept a bucket of candy lying around the house, just waiting for someone to knock on the door and ask for it. "Go on, now," she said. "Hurry up."

My room was situated right off the foyer, and if the Tomkeys had looked in that direction they could have seen my bed, and the brown paper bag marked "My Candy. Keep Out." I didn't want them to know how much I had, and so I went into my room and shut the door behind me. Then I closed the curtains



"Of course it's not too late," my mother said. "Run and get the candy."

going in disguise to the Tomkeys' door, but they were off at the lake, and their house was dark. Before leaving, they had left a coffee can full of gumdrops on the front porch, alongside a sign reading, "Don't be greedy." In terms of Halloween candy, individual gumdrops were just about as low as you could get. This was evidenced by the large number of them floating in an adjacent dog bowl. It was disgusting to think that this was what a gumdrop might look like in your stomach, and it was insulting to be told not to take too much of something you didn't really want in the first place. "Who do these Tomkeys think they are?" my sister Lisa said.

The night after Halloween, we were sitting around watching TV when the doorbell rang. Visitors were infrequent at our house, so, while my father stayed behind, my mother, sisters, and I ran downstairs in a group, opening the door

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and emptied my bag onto the bed, searching for whatever was the crummiest. All my life, chocolate has made me ill. I don't know if I'm allergic or what, but even the smallest amount leaves me with a blinding headache. Eventually, I learned to stay away from it, but as a child I refused to be left out. The brownies were always eaten, and when the pounding began I would blame the grape juice or my mother's cigarette smoke or the tightness of my glasses—anything but the chocolate. My candy bars were poison but they were name brand, and so I put them in pile No. 1, which definitely would not go to the Tomkeys.

Out in the hallway I could hear my mother straining for something to talk about. "A boat!" she said. "That sounds marvellous. Can you just drive it right into the water?"

"Actually, we have a trailer," Mr. Tomkey said. "So what we do is back it into the lake."

"Oh, a trailer. What kind is it?"

"Well, it's a *boat* trailer," Mr. Tomkey said.

"Right, but is it wooden or, you know . . . I guess what I'm asking is what *style* trailer do you have?"

Behind my mother's words were two messages. The first and most obvious was "Yes, I am talking about boat trailers, but also I am dying." The second, meant only for my sisters and me, was "If you do not immediately step forward with that candy you will never again experience freedom, happiness, or the possibility of my warm embrace."

I knew that it was just a matter of time before she came into my room and started collecting the candy herself, grabbing indiscriminately, with no regard for my rating system. Had I been thinking straight, I would have hidden the most valuable items in my dresser drawer, but instead, panicked by the thought of her hand on my doorknob, I tore off the wrappers and began cramming the candy bars into my mouth, desperately, like someone in a contest. Most were miniature, which made them easier to accommodate, but still there was only so much room, and it was hard to chew and fit more in at the same time. The headache began immediately, and I chalked it up to tension.

My mother told the Tomkeys that

she needed to check on something, and then she opened the door and stuck her head inside my room. "What the *hell* are you doing?" she whispered, but my mouth was too full to answer. "I'll just be a moment," she called, and as she closed the door behind her and moved toward my bed I began breaking the wax lips and candy necklaces pulled from pile No. 2. These were the second-best things I had received, and while it hurt to destroy them it would have hurt even more to give them away. I had just started to mutilate a miniature box of Red Hots when my mother pried them from my hands, accidentally finishing the job for me. BB-sized pellets clattered onto the floor, and as I followed them with my eyes she snatched up a roll of Necco wafers.

"Not those," I pleaded, but, rather than words, my mouth expelled chocolate, chewed chocolate, which fell onto the sleeve of her sweater. "Not those. Not those."

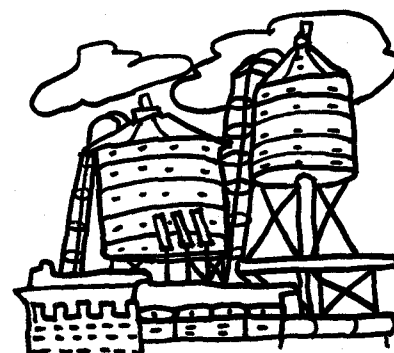
She shook her arm, and the mound of chocolate dropped like a horrible turd onto my bedspread. "You should look at yourself," she said. "I mean, *really* look at yourself."

Along with the Necco wafers she took several Tootsie Pops and a half dozen caramels wrapped in cellophane. I heard her apologize to the Tomkeys for her absence, and then I heard my candy hitting the bottom of their bags.

"What do you say?" Mrs. Tomkey asked.

And the children answered, "Thank you."

While I was in trouble for not bringing my candy sooner, my sisters were in more trouble for not bringing it at all. We spent the early part of the evening in our rooms, then one by one we eased our way back upstairs, and



DETOUR

I had put my days behind me
almost as they happened rolling
faces streets personal dramas
into a scroll quickly
quickly sometimes my heels
were caught in the last conver-
sation so shaking to free myself
all that clutter flew
up into the air scrambled
sentences my sister's death the
name of what's his name his mouth
his fingers a heavy chunk of a
principled political statement
whose?

future was my intention now
all that detritus like sand like
dust has drifted into the eyes
of my children who after all must
continue one of my heaviest
sorrows has just tumbled at
their feet they stumble what
to do anger fear luckily their
children have imperiously
called offering their lives a
detour thank God they've all
gotten away

—Grace Paley

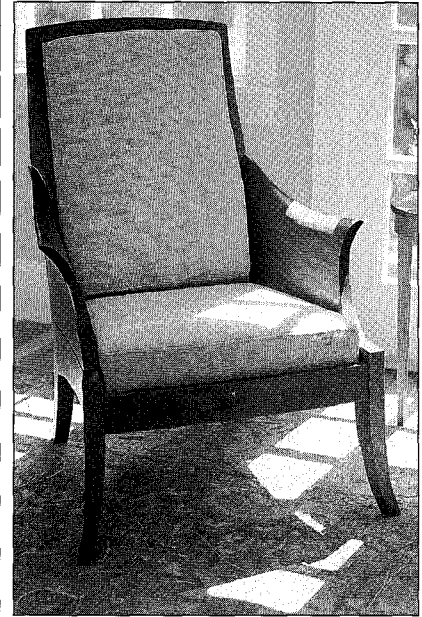
joined our parents in front of the TV. I was the last to arrive, and took a seat on the floor beside the sofa. The show was a Western, and even if my head had not been throbbing I doubt I would have had the wherewithal to follow it. A posse of outlaws crested a rocky hilltop, squinting at a flurry of dust advancing from the horizon, and I thought again of the Tomkeys, and of how alone and out of place they had looked in their dopey costumes. "What was up with that kid's tail?" I asked.

"Sh-h-h," my family said.

For months I had protected and watched over these people, and now, with one stupid act, they had turned my pity into something hard and ugly. The shift wasn't gradual but immediate, and it provoked an uncomfortable feeling of loss. We hadn't been friends, the Tomkeys and I, but still I had given them the gift of my curiosity. Wondering about the Tomkey family had made

me feel generous, but now I would have to shift gears, and find pleasure in hating them. The only alternative was to do as my mother had instructed, and take a good look at myself. This was an old trick, designed to turn one's hatred inward, and while I was determined not to fall for it, it was hard to shake the mental picture snapped by her suggestion: Here is a boy sitting on a bed, his mouth smeared with chocolate. He's a human being, but also he's a pig, surrounded by trash and gorging himself so that others may be denied. Were this the only image in the world, you'd be forced to give it your full attention, but fortunately there were others. This stagecoach, for instance, coming round the bend with a cargo of gold. This shiny new Mustang convertible. This teen-age girl, her hair a beautiful mane, sipping Pepsi through a straw, one picture after another, on and on until the news, and whatever came on after the news. ♦

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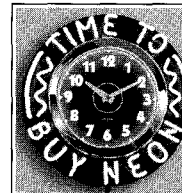
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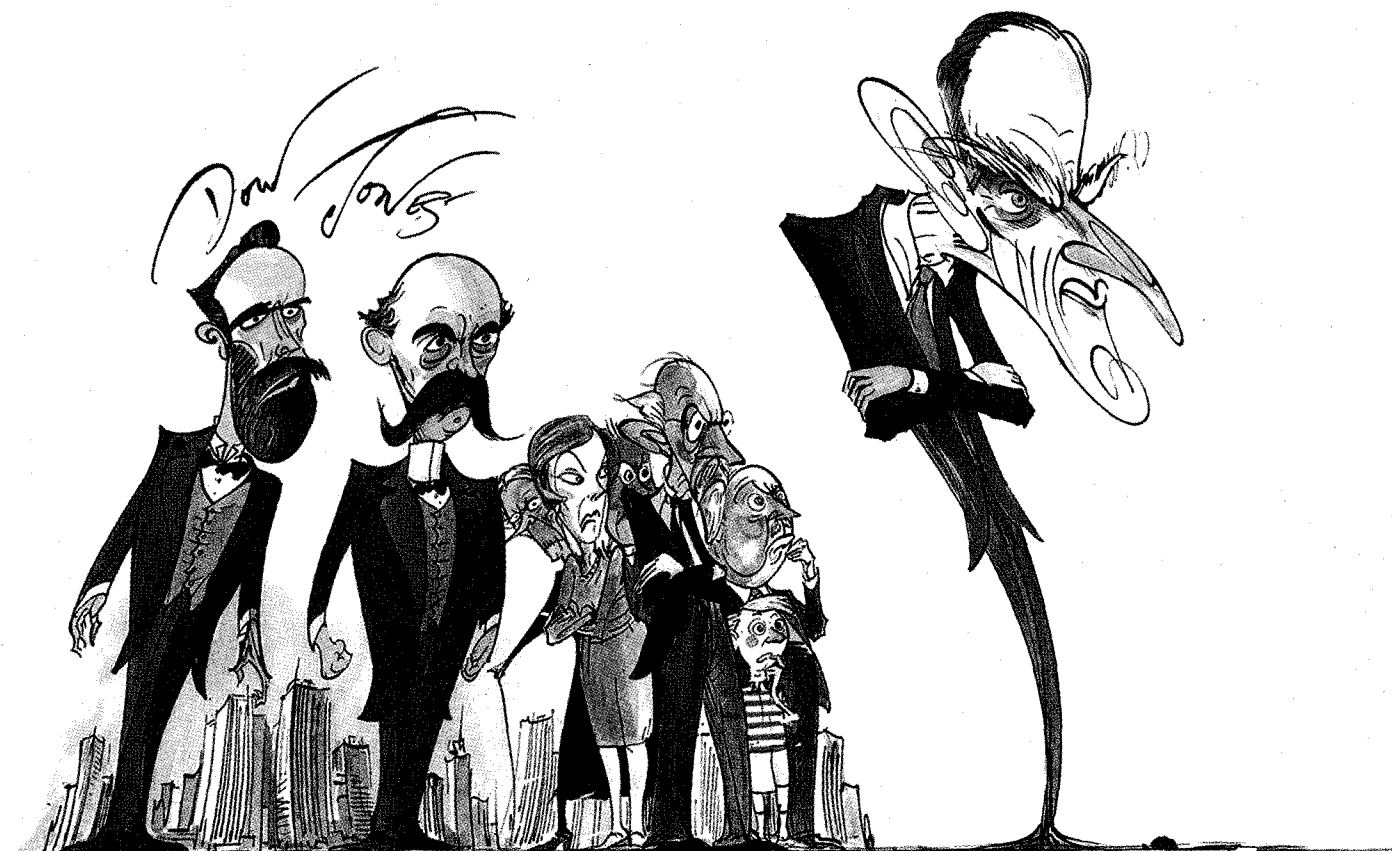
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ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

FAMILY BUSINESS

Dow Jones is not like other companies. How long can that go on?

BY KEN AULETTA

At first glance, the *Wall Street Journal* and its parent company, Dow Jones & Co., appear to be models of serenity. The newsroom, as newsrooms go, is surprisingly tranquil, despite a recent round of layoffs. Paul E. Steiger, the managing editor (the paper's top editorial position), listens more than he exhorts, and jokes about how boring he is. The chairman and C.E.O. of Dow Jones, Peter R. Kann, glances at his watch when he makes presentations, as if he couldn't wait to flee.

The apparent calm is misleading. Kann will be sixty-one this year, four years short of mandatory retirement, and no one knows if his successor will be a journalist, like him and like his predecessors for the past half century. Steiger, too, is sixty-one, and the competition for his job has begun. The financial health of the company is

less than robust; in 2002, Dow Jones lost eight million dollars, and reduced costs by nearly a hundred and seventy-nine million dollars. More than seventeen hundred full-time employees have been let go since December, 2000—about a quarter of the workforce—and some *Journal* employees say that the paper lacks the energy and investigative appetite it once had. Many reporters and editors, even though they like Kann personally, think that the company might be in better financial condition if its C.E.O. were a tough businessman.

People who work at the *Journal* speak as if they'd been through a war, and in a way they have. Their offices, at One World Financial Center, are across the street from the site of the Twin Towers, and were almost destroyed on September 11, 2001; many operations were moved to

New Jersey. (Under Steiger, the *Journal*'s extraordinary coverage of the day won a Pulitzer.) In January, 2002, the *Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl was kidnapped and murdered in Pakistan. A year after the terror attacks, the newspaper moved back to three of its seven floors, but the offices, with bare walls and empty bookshelves, have a Motel 6 feel to them.

The *Journal*, like two other great American newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, is controlled by a family, and there is concern that the younger generation might want to sell the company. Unlike the *Washington Post* Company, which has diversified, and which expects to generate more revenue from its Kaplan unit, an educational-testing and teaching service, than from the *Post*, Dow Jones relies on the *Journal*

GERALD SCARFE



for fifty-five per cent of its revenues and, in most years, seventy per cent of its profits. And Dow Jones, with revenues of about \$1.5 billion, is just half the size of the New York Times Company. The Bancroft family has owned Dow Jones since the beginning of the twentieth century, and has steadfastly spurned overtures to sell, but its resistance may be softening. "Anything is possible—you never say never," said Leslie Hill, an American Airlines pilot and one of three Bancrofts who serve on the Dow Jones board, along with a family trustee, Roy Hammer. While the family has "a lot of pride" in its journalistic property, Hill says that family members sometimes disagree about financial issues. "I hear comments that they're not happy with the company's performance."

The strengths of the *Journal* are obvious. Its daily circulation (1,820,600) is exceeded in the United States only by that of *U.S.A. Today* (2,162,454); if one adds the paper's electronic subscribers who do not subscribe to the newspaper—there are almost four hundred thousand of them—the *Journal* ranks No. 1. The

Journal also enjoys enviable demographics. According to readership surveys, the average annual income of *Journal* readers is about two hundred thousand dollars—about twice that of the *Times*. In the mid-nineties, when other newspapers were giving away their online editions (as most still do), Kann insisted on charging for his. The gamble resulted in the Web's largest subscription site; six hundred and eighty-six thousand subscribers paid either seventy-nine dollars annually if they did not subscribe to the newspaper or thirty-nine dollars if they did. L. Gordon Crovitz, the president of electronic publishing at Dow Jones, predicts that wsj.com "could one day have more subscribers than the newspaper."

Recently, I asked Paul Steiger to imagine telling a reporter to write about his employer. What would he want answered? There are two crucial questions, Steiger responded: "Is it big enough to stand alone in a world where most competitors are much bigger?" And will the Bancroft family continue to "believe in it as an institution that is more than just an income-

producing business?" Steiger himself is optimistic on both counts.

Many companies—Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., Gannett, Pearson P.L.C., General Electric, Microsoft, Bloomberg, and Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, among others—have expressed interest in buying Dow Jones. (To shield the *Journal* from hostile takeovers, the family in 1984 submitted—and shareholders approved—a plan to issue a new, Class B stock with ten times the voting power of Class A stock. This plan would allow them to raise cash by selling Class A shares; at the same time, they would retain eighty per cent control over the new stock. The *Washington Post* and the *Times* have long employed two classes of stock.) Last year, Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., the *Times*' publisher, met in Boston with Roy Hammer, and proposed a merger of the two companies. Hammer rejected the idea. Sulzberger then wrote to him proposing that the *Times* acquire Dow Jones. The letter was vague on specifics but clear on intent. After informing Kann, but without consulting the board, Hammer

Charles Dow, Edward Jones, the Bancrofts, Roy Hammer, Peter Kann, Karen Elliott House, Paul Steiger, and Norman Pearlstine.

telephoned Sulzberger to express surprise at the proposal, as he thought he'd made it plain that the company was not for sale. (Sulzberger declined to comment.)

Some members of the Bancroft family have said privately that an offer from the Washington Post Company and one of its directors, Warren Buffett, would be treated with more interest. "The Washington Post is a different animal," William Cox III, a family member who was a Dow Jones executive and now runs a hedge fund, said. "If you asked me if I had some interest, going forward, in being in business with Warren Buffett, you're damn right. He's very savvy on media investments." But Donald Graham, the chairman of the Post, insists that he has made no approaches. (The Journal and the Post already have a relationship: the international editions of the Journal began carrying Post stories early this year after the Times abruptly ended its partnership with the Post in the International Herald Tribune.) However, when I asked Graham if he would be interested in owning the Journal, he said, "Of course. So would thousands of others."

The Wall Street Journal was launched in 1882 as a business newsletter by two journalists, Charles Dow and Edward Jones. Fifteen years later, Dow Jones

introduced its electronic news ticker, a wire service that today employs more than seven hundred people and has three hundred and twenty-six thousand subscribers around the world. With the death of Charles Dow, in 1902, the company was sold to its famously fat Boston correspondent, Clarence Walker Barron (who, in 1921, founded Barron's). When Barron died, in 1928, ownership passed to his stepdaughters, Jane and Martha. Jane Barron's husband, Hugh Bancroft, a Harvard Law School graduate who had worked alongside his father-in-law, took over the management of the enterprise. But five years later, at the age of fifty-four, Bancroft, who suffered from depression, killed himself. The company was left in the hands of the Journal's editor, and since then the Bancroft family has not had an active management role.

Today, the family consists of the descendants of the three children, now deceased, of Jane and Hugh Bancroft—about thirty-five adults, according to Roy Hammer. They are, among other professions, writers, investment bankers, equestrians, and philanthropists. Hammer, who is sixty-nine, is a slender man with expressive white eyebrows. Although he is not a Bancroft, he is by far the family's most powerful representative. During a four-hour conversation at lunch and then

at his office, at Hemenway & Barnes, one of the oldest law firms in Boston, Hammer seemed to choose every word with great care, often taking long pauses between thoughts.

The Bancrofts have been represented by Hemenway & Barnes since the end of the Second World War, and Hammer has been their designated trustee for three decades. There is no family steering committee, but there is an annual Bancroft Family Forum, over which Hammer and his partners preside. "Every member of the Bancroft family who is eighteen years or older is invited," Hammer said. "We have a discussion about the company, about concerns they may have about the company."

Each quarter, the Bancrofts meet at Hammer's office to review their investments. A substantial part of the family's wealth is in Dow Jones stock, which pays regular dividends. (The family now owns about a quarter of the sixty-one million Class A shares and eight of ten Class B, or voting, shares. In good or bad years, Dow Jones dividends over the past five years have remained steady, at about a dollar per share.)

"The family is a factor when we discuss dividends, but not the only factor," the director Irvine O. Hockaday, Jr., a former C.E.O. of Hallmark Cards, said. Hammer explained that dividends are paid into a trust, with "the oldest living generation" getting the largest portions, which angers some younger family members. Although the Bancrofts, unlike the Sulzbergers and the Grahams, are not engaged in management, Hammer says that they have "the same sense of the public trust, of feeling the responsibility for the stewardship of their company, particularly the Wall Street Journal."

When people talk about Dow Jones, it is often noted that Peter Kann, the C.E.O., and Karen Elliott House, the publisher of the Journal, are married to each other—and that they have been with the company for a total of sixty-eight years. Kann, the son of a Rutgers University professor, always seemed to stand out; at the age of nine, he launched the Jefferson Road Snooper, a community newspaper in Princeton that sold for five cents. His mother typed the stories and served as publisher. As a teen-ager, he wrote for the Princeton Packet, a weekly



"O.K., we'll try it your way—let's ignore any problems that come up in the next twenty years and see what happens."

owned by a fellow Princeton resident, Barney Kilgore, who became the *Journal's* managing editor in 1941, and is credited with transforming the paper into the well-written, broader business publication that it remains today. Kann was an eager student. At Harvard, he joined the *Crimson*, where Don Graham, another *Crimson* reporter, remembers how Peter followed a Cambridge city councilman who every year introduced legislation to pave Harvard Yard and make it a parking lot. "Kann covered it as a great show," Graham said. "Peter wrote like a dream. He saw the full humor of this Cambridge City Council vs. Harvard situation."

Back home in Princeton, Kann was invited to play touch football with Dow Jones executives. At the end of his junior year, he worked as an intern in the *Journal's* San Francisco bureau, and soon after graduation, in 1964, the paper hired him as a reporter in Pittsburgh. After nine months, he was transferred to Los Angeles, where, he recalls, "I kept raising my hand, saying, 'If you need someone to go to Asia.'"

In 1967, he was the first *Journal* reporter to take up residence in Vietnam, and his stories were noticed by, among others, Warren Phillips, the executive editor of all Dow Jones publications and a distinguished foreign correspondent himself. "The kinds of stories he was doing went beyond body counts and tried to give you a feel for the country," Phillips, who became the C.E.O. of Dow Jones in 1975, said.

In Saigon, Kann met Francesca Mayer, a Minnesota-born social worker. By 1969, Kann and Mayer had married and were living in Hong Kong, which Kann used as his base to cover Asia for the paper. Kann was there when India and Pakistan went to war in December of 1971. His editor ordered him to abandon Dhaka, but Kann cabled back, "Message unreceived." His war accounts won the 1972 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting.

Dow Jones already published a business weekly, the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, in Hong Kong, and now Kann championed an Asian edition of the *Journal*. The first, thirty-page edition of the *Asian Wall Street Journal* rolled off the presses on September 1, 1976—with Kann as the editor and publisher. He hired the *Journal's* Tokyo bureau chief, Norman Pearlstine, as managing editor. The two became close friends; they were joined by a third



"After tonight, you're going to need a prescription."

editor, Seth Lipsky, who had been a colleague of Pearlstine's in the Detroit bureau and was befriended by Kann when he worked as a correspondent in Vietnam for *Stars & Stripes*. Lipsky, who now edits the New York *Sun*, says of Kann that he "made the *Asian Wall Street Journal*," and that his efforts "helped make the *Wall Street Journal* a global paper."

Phillips believed that the company had to diversify. It had made a foray in that direction when, in 1970, it acquired Ottaway Newspapers, which consisted of nine small dailies and three Sunday papers. But in 1985 Dow Jones, a traditionally cautious company, lost out when it tried to buy the Des Moines *Register*. In 1981, Phillips had got the company to invest eighty million dollars to buy a quarter of the nation's twelfth-largest cable system, Continental Cablevision. Five years later, Dow Jones, worried about the effect of this investment on short-term profits, sold it all. The company made three hundred and twenty million dollars—but not the estimated \$2.7 billion it would have fetched had it held onto its share.

Phillips wanted to broaden his management team, and in 1979 asked Kann to move to New York to become his assistant. The following year, Kann was ap-

pointed a Dow Jones vice-president and associate publisher of the *Journal*. Phillips knew that he was positioning Kann as a possible successor. "From my selfish point of view, I was glad to have his help," Phillips, who is now seventy-seven, said. "From the institution's point of view, he had proved himself." Kann agreed to come, in part, he says, because his daughter, Hillary, was six and his wife, Francie, as she was called, suffered from alcoholism and depression, and "there was no effective way to treat that in Hong Kong."

Norman Pearlstine, meanwhile, was told that he had a chance to succeed Kann in Asia, but he was unwilling to spend another four years abroad. In 1978, he went to *Forbes*, where he spent two unhappy years. Kann brought him back to the *Journal*, and to this day Pearlstine thanks Kann for being "good enough to forgive my departure." In 1983, with the support of top management, Kann made Pearlstine the managing editor.

Soon, the *Journal* not only broadened its definition of business news but began to encourage investigative reporting and the kind of narrative writing more typically found in magazines. Pearlstine recruited a new generation of talent. He

prominently displayed the work of the Washington bureau chief, Al Hunt, and his team, which included the diplomatic correspondent Karen Elliott House. Pearlstine also hired Paul Steiger, who was then the business editor of the *Los Angeles Times* and had been at the *Journal's* San Francisco bureau, as an assistant managing editor. (Pearlstine says that when he hired Steiger he told him, "Don't come here unless you want to succeed me as managing editor.") He made Walter Mossberg, the national-security reporter, the Personal Technology columnist. Today, according to knowledgeable sources, Mossberg is the paper's highest-paid writer, earning, with bonuses, about five hundred thousand dollars a year; beginning reporters earn about forty-four thousand dollars, and senior correspondents as much as a hundred and forty thousand dollars.

Pearlstine is credited with helping to transform the *Journal*, but not everyone was a Pearlstine fan. When I asked Robert Bartley, the *Journal's* former editorial-page editor, to describe Pearlstine's legacy, Bartley, in the same calm but savage way in which he wrote editorials, carved up his former colleague: "Well, circulation was down. Advertising was down. A lot of reporters won prizes for writing books beating up on our subscribers and advertisers. Now, Norm's a very creative guy—the three-section newspaper was his. It's the kind of thing he was very good at. His job at *Time*"—Pearlstine is now editor-in-chief of *Time Inc.'s* hundred and thirty magazines—"probably suits him very well because he can jump in and shake things up and not have to run them. I don't think he's good at sustained effort."

If there were tensions between Bartley and Pearlstine, they did not intrude on the friendship between Pearlstine and Kann, who was having problems at home. Francie Kann had become a recluse and refused to accept counselling. In 1981, Kann and his daughter, then eight, moved to his mother's house in Princeton, a mile away, leaving the house to Francie. It was around this time that Kann began dating Karen Elliott House.

House, who is fifty-five, is a regal woman; she is five feet nine and has short, straight light-brown hair. Only when she speaks does one get a hint of her roots, in Matador, Texas. The town

had five churches, one stoplight, and a population of nine hundred, she says, and its "only claim to fame was a gas station right by that blinking red light called Bob's Oil Well," which had a cage full of rattlesnakes. Matador had a drive-in movie theatre, but, she says, if you went to a movie on Sunday night instead of church "you were a heathen or a hypocrite." The Elliott family belonged to the Church of Christ, and her father, a welder, ruled the household. To shield the three children from outside influences, they were forbidden both television and the telephone. Her father wouldn't let Karen play basketball, because, he told her, taking a school bus was too perilous. When she thought of becoming a teacher, her father warned that the schools were full of Communists. Since she published school news in the local paper, she had an alternative: journalism.

House recalls that her mother "was the family servant for all of us. I did not want to be like my mother. I wanted to get out and do something." The one time her father relaxed his grip was when he

DOVES

So much crap in my head,
so many rubbishy facts,
so many half-baked
theories and opinions,
so many public figures
I care nothing about
but who stick like pitch;
so much political swill.

So much crap, yet
so much I don't know
and would dearly like to:
I recognize nearly none
of the birdsongs of dawn—
all I'm sure of is
the maddeningly vapid *who*,
who-who of the doves.

And I don't have half
the names of flowers
and trees, and still less
of humankind's myths,
the benevolent ones,
from the days before ours;
water-plashed wastes,
radiant intercessions.

agreed to let her attend the University of Texas. "If you don't like it, you can come home," he said, and her voice broke as she recalled this moment. Nearly four decades later, in a graduation speech at Boston University, she remembered her father this way: "I was fortunate—though I didn't think so at the time—to have a father who taught us to go alone because he wouldn't let us 'go along.'"

House's first newspaper job, which she landed in 1970, was at the *Dallas Morning News*, where she covered schools. She soon asked to be assigned to the Washington bureau, and in 1971 she was. Three years later, the *Journal* hired her, and by 1978 she was covering the State Department and travelling extensively. She also got married to Arthur House, who worked at the World Bank. In the early nineteen-eighties, Arthur went to work for Cigna and moved to Connecticut, and the marriage did not last long after that.

House first met Peter Kann in 1979, when he was introduced to the Washington bureau. They saw each other again a year or two later at a correspondent's

So few poems entire,
 such a meagre handful
 of precise recollections of paintings:
 detritus instead, junk,
 numbers I should long ago
 have erased, inane
 "information" I'll doubtlessly
 take with me to the grave.

So much crap, and yet,
 now, morning, that first
 sapphire dome of glow,
the glow! The first sounds
 of being awake, *the sounds!*—
 a wind whispering, but even
 trucks clanking past,
 even the idiot doves.

And within me, along
 with the garbage, faces, faces
 and voices, so many
 lives woven into mine,
 such improbable quantities
 of memory; so much already
 forgotten, lost, pruned away—
 yet the doves, the doves!

—C. K. Williams

farewell party and began dating, secretly at first. "It was a whirlwind romance," Al Hunt, who had dated Karen briefly seven years earlier and had grown close to Kann, recalls. "But she was also dating Charlie Rose. She was torn. She liked them both. And she was in the middle of a divorce." The news that House and Kann were romantically involved was not well received, Hunt says. "There was resentment when she was made diplomatic correspondent at age thirty. Karen and self-doubt have always been strangers. But, when it came to her profession, she was good."

They went public with their romance at Dow Jones's hundredth-anniversary party, in London, late in 1982. (That was also the occasion when Pearlstine, the soon-to-be managing editor, brought the woman he had been dating, Nancy Friday, whose books about sexual fantasies were best-sellers.) Francie Kann died of liver disease in 1983, and a year later House and Kann were married.

Kann's formal title was associate publisher, but he was by then the de-facto

publisher. In 1984, House won a Pulitzer Prize for a series that revealed the role played by King Hussein of Jordan in advancing President Reagan's Middle East peace plan. (Seth Lipsky, who was then the foreign editor, remembers that when Hussein stopped returning House's phone calls, she called the American Ambassador to Jordan and said, "Who does the King think he is? This is the *Wall Street Journal*." Lipsky went on, "Within less than a minute, her phone rang and they said, 'Hold the line for His Majesty.' She knew the phones were tapped. She knew exactly what she was doing.") Kann and House were a highly visible couple in those days; Dow Jones often provided a



helicopter to ferry them between New York and Princeton.

In retrospect, it seems inevitable that the friendship of Kann, House, and Pearlstine couldn't continue as it had. There were complaints that House was taking advantage of her marriage to Kann. John Huey, the editorial director of Time Inc., remembers an odd incident in 1984, when he was the managing editor of the European *Wall Street Journal*. He and House had assigned correspondents to cover the same story. Huey said that he called her in Maine, where she and Kann were vacationing. "You want me to staff it, or do you want to?" Huey remembers asking. Then, he recalled, "She starts screaming at me over the phone, 'John Huey, I'm not going to sit here and let you call me a liar!'"

It was, Huey says, as if "my end of the conversation was not even taking place." Afterward, he typed a note to Pearlstine, described what happened, and said, "I think it's safe to say my days are numbered here." Huey believed that House "was doing it to get me away from Peter. Anybody Peter was fond of, she drove off." Huey told me that the *Journal* became polarized between "Norm people" and "Karen people."

"I have no recollection of John Huey ever calling me at home," House says. "I don't spend my life undermining people with Peter Kann. He's a grownup man who can think for himself."

An unflattering 1997 article, written by Robert Sam Anson for *Vanity Fair*, said that House had involved Kann in the editing of her King Hussein stories—a revelation that had upset Pearlstine. (Pearlstine had nevertheless promoted her to foreign editor.) When, in 1986, House appeared on the raucous television program "The McLaughlin Group," Hunt was dismayed, because he had told his staff not to go on TV to offer opinions on subjects that they were supposed to cover impartially. (In the modern cable era, that tradition has apparently vanished.) Pearlstine was unhappy and assumed that House had ignored him and gone straight to Kann. When Hunt, House, and Pearlstine discussed it over drinks, House became so agitated that she threw a glass of wine at Pearlstine. (In an unpublished letter to *Vanity Fair*, which first reported this incident, a Dow Jones spokesman cited what he said

was a partial list of twenty-one “un-truths” in the profile, including, “Ms. House clearly and specifically recalls that she tossed her wine on Mr. Pearlstine’s shirt in 1986 after he made a sexist remark about another female *Journal* reporter.” Hunt and Pearlstine told me that they were shocked by this claim and say that no such remark was made.)

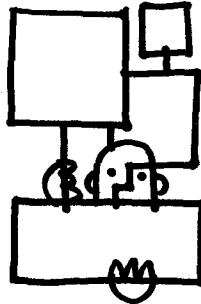
Pearlstine insists that his relationship with Kann remained strong throughout his nine years as managing editor and that “I never felt I was being second-guessed by Peter.” But he does remember that after House and Kann’s frequent morning helicopter commutes he would get separate but similar memos from each with story ideas. “It was a not so subtle reminder of her influence,” he says.

In 1989, Kann was invited to join the board of Dow Jones. Meanwhile, Warren Phillips and James H. Ottaway, Jr., a senior vice-president of Dow Jones, appointed House vice-president of the company’s International Group, a position that gave her responsibility for all international editions of the *Journal*. “She organized her territory and her personnel and got things done, in my mind more effectively and more forcefully than her predecessors,” Phillips said, adding that, under House, the *Journal* in Asia and Europe became profitable. At the same time, he acknowledged that she could be “brusque,” and he added, “I got vibes that this person or that person resented her, or had a nickname for her. She had detractors. I was aware of that. But, to the best of my ability to track that down, it always came back to the fact that she did knock heads together but in my mind she did it when it needed to be done.”

“People tend to describe me as ‘tough,’” House told me. “I don’t think I’m tough. I think I’m demanding.” One longtime *Journal* editor who has worked with both House and Kann and finds him too nice as a businessman and her too “cold,” describes their different management styles this way: if, in a meeting, House doesn’t like something that is said she will simply blurt out, “That is stupid.” By contrast, Kann will say, “We’ve got to talk about that. Let’s get together later this week.” Kann calls House “an idealist about the journalism profession” and someone with

“a clear set of values of right and wrong.”

No doubt House, like her father, tends to see the world in somewhat stark terms. At Boston University, she told the graduating class, “There are too few in our society who really have clear, individual convictions about right and wrong, truth and falsehood, and to use the words of our President—which I applaud—‘good and evil.’” Of George W. Bush, she added, “The fact that he sees the world in fairly simple terms is actually a virtue.”



If there was always something odd about the Kann-House-Pearlstine troika, perhaps nothing at the modern *Wall Street Journal* has been odder than the role of the opinion page and its onetime editor Robert Bartley.

These days, Bartley is a columnist for the *Journal* and is listed on the masthead as Editor Emeritus. From 1972 to 2002, he ran the editorial page, and although he has the demure manner of a Midwestern tourist lost in New York, in those decades the *Journal* stood apart from other newspapers; it was in many ways as if Bartley owned and operated his own private newspaper. “He’s one of the most significant editors of the last fifty years,” Paul Gigot, the man who succeeded him, says.

Born in Marshall, Minnesota, and raised in a moderate Republican household in Iowa, Bartley served in the Army Reserve after graduating from Iowa State, earned a master’s degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin, and joined the *Journal* as a reporter in 1962. Vermont Royster, his predecessor on the editorial page, liked his intellectual brashness, and gave him some books to review; he offered him a job on the page in 1964. At the time, Bartley thought of himself as “a liberal Republican,” and voted for Lyndon Johnson over Barry Goldwater. “I thought Goldwater was too extreme,” he told me.

It was one of the last occasions on which Bartley would find himself that far from the right. When, over lunch one day, Phillips offered him the editorial-page job, Bartley recalled, “Warren said he wanted to keep the editorial policy we’ve had: ‘Free markets and free men.’ Those were my marching orders.” And in the late seventies and early eighties his editorial page became a model of the form: witty,

literate, and passionate in its eccentric causes, which in Bartley’s case was a non-stop campaign on behalf of supply-side economics, a return to the gold standard, free trade, smaller government, and prosecuting the Cold War. It was also a page that often stood almost alone, as when it praised Israel in 1981 for destroying Osirak, the Iraqi nuclear plant near Baghdad. The predominantly Democratic Bancroft family sometimes complained to Phillips about the “extreme” positions that Bartley’s page took on economic issues, but neither they nor Phillips intruded. Roy Hammer told me that the Bancroft family would have preferred “a less acerbic editorial voice.” He went on, “On some social issues, on tax-policy issues, I certainly don’t agree with the editorial board. There is a lot that I think is beyond the pale.” Hammer expressed the view of many reporters inside the paper when he said that the editorial page sometimes omitted facts that contradicted its assertions, and therefore played by a different set of rules.

Phillips heard some of this criticism during a dinner for the Washington bureau in 1980. According to Jerry Rosenberg’s book “Inside the Wall Street Journal: The Power and the History of Dow Jones & Company and America’s Most Influential Newspaper,” reporters complained that Bartley no longer ran their pieces because they usually did not conform to his conservative beliefs. Bartley, who had just learned that he had won a Pulitzer Prize for his editorials, recalls that what he said to the bureau was “On a lot of issues of the day, we had better sources than they did, which they resented. I was not very discreet about it.”

Reporters felt that the opinion section crossed a line in advancing its ideology, sometimes befriendings those who pushed a particular agenda, or even lobbying and strategizing with them. This happened in the late seventies with Jude Wanniski, an editorial-board member, on behalf of supply-side economics; and, in the nineties, with board members such as Micah Morrison and John Fund, who met with anti-Clinton activists. A *Times* reporter once asked Bartley whether his page would have supported or attacked House Speaker Newt Gingrich or some other staunch conservative if he had been charged with sexual misconduct, as Bill Clinton was. “Yeah, we would have defended them,” Bartley said. “That’s the way it is.”

In the Clinton era, the tone of Bartley's page became more shrill. A federal judge was characterized as "Osama's Favorite Judge," and Tom Daschle, then the Democratic Majority Leader, was "the Senate's most accomplished holdup man." Bartley treated Whitewater as if it were Watergate, devoting to it what turned out to be more than three thousand pages of editorial and op-ed columns, which were later anthologized in six volumes. The page attacked deputy White House counsel Vincent Foster, who killed himself not long after an editorial appeared with the headline "WHO IS VINCENT FOSTER?" He left a note blaming Washington for making "sport" out of politics and singling out the *Journal*. "The WSJ editors lie without consequence." After the suicide, a Bartley editorial called for a special counsel to investigate Foster's death as a possible murder, and the last sentence read, "If he was driven to take his life by purely personal despair, a serious investigation should share this conclusion so that he can be appropriately mourned." When, over lunch, I asked Bartley to describe his biggest mistakes in thirty years as editor, he had one answer: "The first editorial after Vince Foster's death. I'd like to rewrite the last sentence." What he would have liked to say was "Maybe his memory could do for depression what Betty Ford did for alcoholism."

People often speculated that Kann did not support Bartley's opinions. In fact, Kann's affability has little to do with his unyielding view of the world. "I don't think there's any position of major consequence that the editorial page has taken over the years that I would not be a believer in," he said. House, for her part, said, "Our editorial positions are already well known. You don't have to ask are we for or against the war. We're basically a free-market, free-people—if you will, 'America first, capitalism best'—kind of editorial page."

Kann, like House, implicitly acknowledges that Bartley reported to no one. And what if Kann had not been a believer in Bartley's editorials? "I hope I would still have the good sense not to try and impose my view on the editorial page," he said.

By the late eighties, the distance between Kann and Pearlstine had widened. They no longer socialized. "It's one of the saddest things for me that Peter and Norman's relations became strained,"

Al Hunt said. After Kann was made publisher of the *Journal* and chief operating officer of the company, in 1989, Pearlstine wanted to try new magazine ventures. But the conservative, debt-averse culture of Dow Jones resisted. In partnership with Hearst, the company did start a personal-business magazine, *SmartMoney*, but Pearlstine at first believed that Dow Jones should have done it alone. He was unhappy to cede control of the Asian and European *Journals*, which became part of House's international division. And he pushed the company to acquire the Financial News Network, and was disappointed when, in 1991, after Kann was chosen to succeed Phillips as C.E.O., Kann failed to secure the deal and pulled out of the bidding. (FNN was eventually

bought by G.E.'s CNBC, for about a hundred and forty-five million dollars.)

In 1992, Pearlstine decided to leave. At his farewell party, colleagues crowded into a Dow Jones conference room. Pearlstine might have made a speech in which he boasted of his achievements. Instead, he said, "I'm going to be remembered as the managing editor who brought Paul Steiger back to the *Wall Street Journal*—and groomed him to be his successor."

Some colleagues took more notice of another gesture. As Peter Kann and Karen Elliott House looked on, Pearlstine awkwardly handed Steiger a package that he said was "a *Wall Street Journal* tradition." The audience watched as Steiger opened the package, which contained a two-and-a-half-foot-tall papier-

NEW ITEMS FROM LA-Z-HOUSE. "WHY STOP AT A CHAIR?"™

#1029: La-Z-Dinner®~
It's a bunch of food in a box. Eat it with your hands. Then throw the box on the floor, where it'll disintegrate, eventually.

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Ever envy people with wigs? If you're tired of washing and drying and combing and all that crap, this is the ticket.

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Forget books on tape. Too much work. Try "Sentences - On - Tape."
That Holden Caulfield is quite a teenager in *The Catcher in the Rye*.
NEXT!

#2380: La-Z-Conversational Guide®~
Because only some kind of superman can listen to everything everyone says all the time.

#2652: La-Z-Beds®~
For when even trying to fall asleep seems beyond exhausting. Available in Ambien, Somnifex, and Phenobarbital.

R. Clu

mâché dog with a copy of the *Journal* in its teeth. It was the same dog, as almost everyone there knew, that Kann and House had given Pearlstine at his wedding, in 1988. "It was a rebuke," according to a reporter who knew that Pearlstine was publicly returning the wedding gift.

Paul Steiger is now the longest-serving managing editor in the *Journal's* century-old life. Steiger, who was born in the Bronx (his father was a C.P.A.), once planned to become an economist. But after attending graduate school at Yale he turned instead to journalism.

The contrasts between Pearlstine and Steiger are vivid. Pearlstine strides into a room; Steiger has a slight limp from childhood polio. Pearlstine has many friends; Steiger says that his only intimate friend is Byron E. (Barney) Calame, the son of a fundamentalist Missouri preacher who worked with him in California and later went to New York, where he is now a deputy managing editor at the *Journal*. Pearlstine says that the *Journal* is a better paper under Steiger. Kann says of Steiger, "He manages people because they respect him, not because they're afraid of him. He listens to alternate arguments. He welcomes criticism."

During the nineties, the newspaper thrived, but the company itself had a turbulent time. The \$1.6-billion acquisition, in the late eighties, of Telerate, an electronic provider of financial information, which had seemed to be a perfect fit between Dow Jones's expertise in gathering news and Telerate's in delivering it to subscribers, turned into what Kann calls "the biggest business problem I had to face." Competitors like Bloomberg L.P. and Reuters Holdings P.L.C. were spending freely to upgrade their databases and their analytic capability; Dow Jones tried to keep costs down and was quickly left behind.

By 1997, Kann says, "we knew we had to invest or get out." In January, Dow Jones announced that Kann and the board of directors had unanimously approved a proposal to spend six hundred and fifty million dollars over the next three to four years to jump-start Telerate. "No one is satisfied with where we are in the business today, but we are confident that we can change that," Kann said at the time.

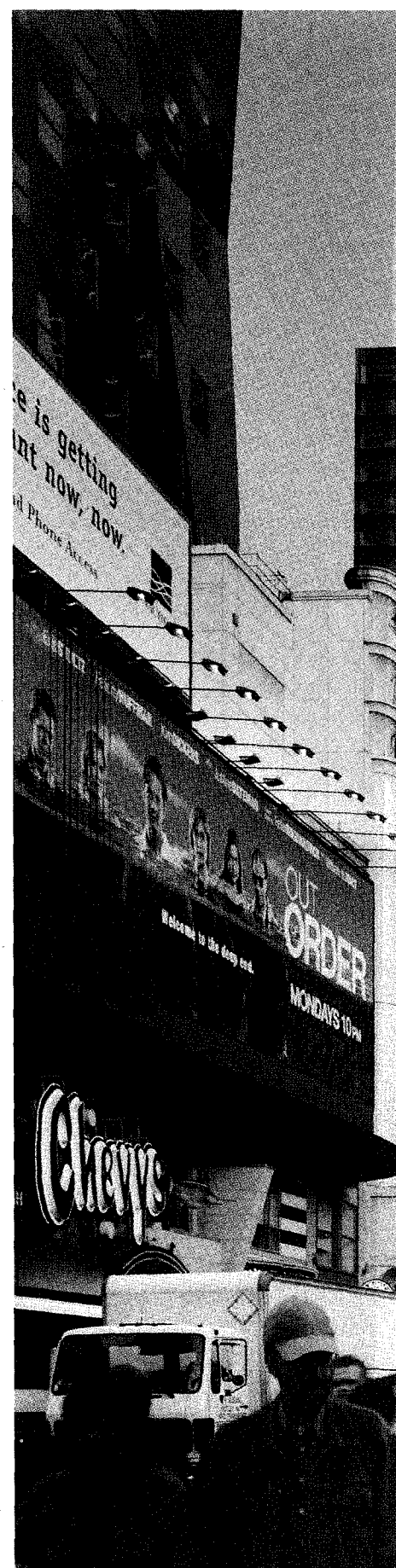
A month later, *Fortune*, which had been energized by its then managing ed-

itor, John Huey, and was overseen by Norman Pearlstine, published a devastating story about Dow Jones and Telerate. After the *Fortune* article, written by Joseph Nocera, Roy Hammer urged the board to add more independent directors—a process that Hammer says had begun before the article appeared. Hammer himself joined the board in 1998, aware that board membership posed a potential conflict between his legal responsibilities to the family and his fiduciary responsibilities to all the shareholders. But after "the Telerate fiasco," Hammer explains, he learned that "standing apart from the decision-making process at the company was not fulfilling our fiduciary responsibility to the family."

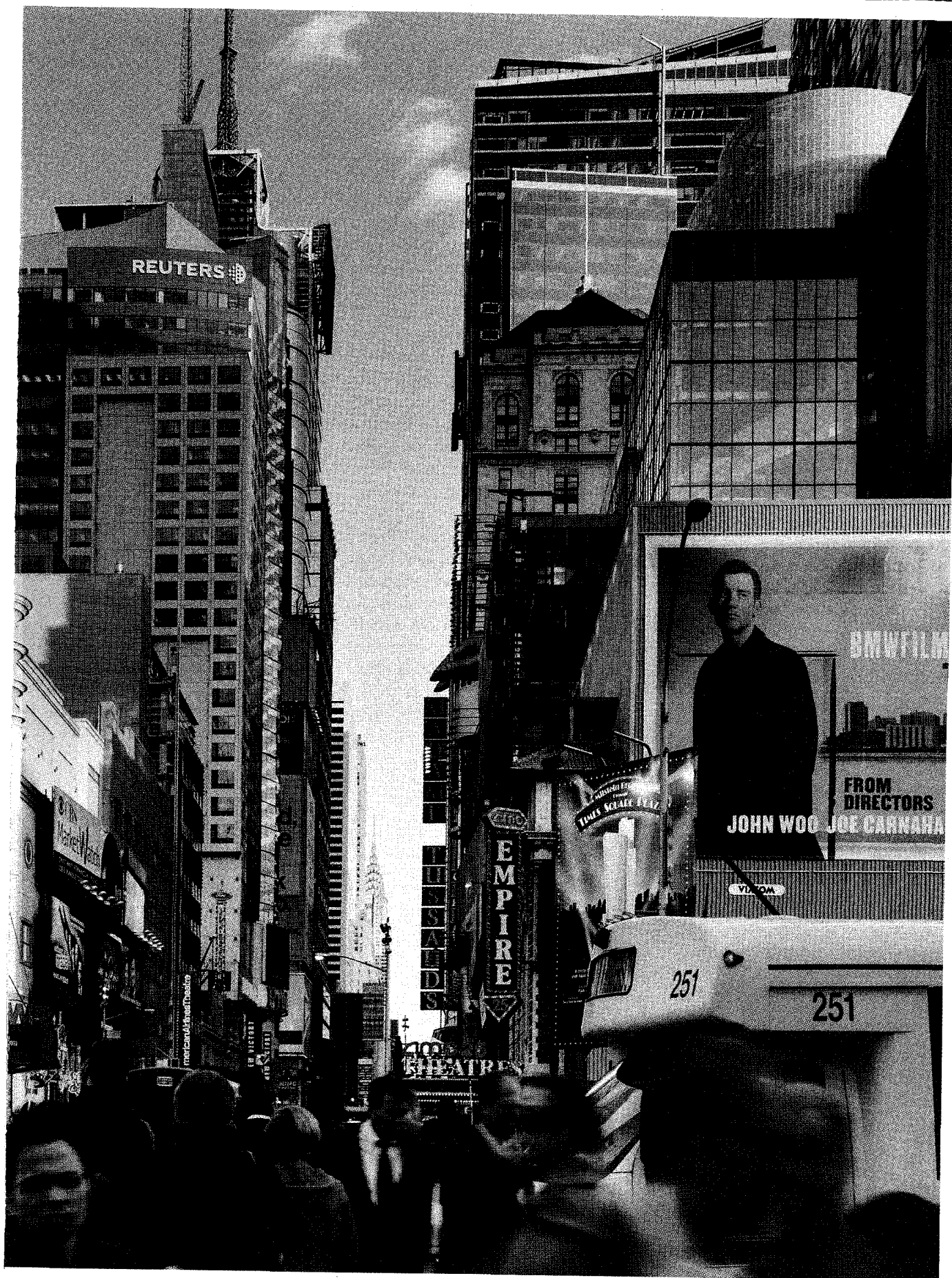
In the wake of Telerate, Dow Jones became the object of takeover maneuvers. Two investors, Michael F. Price and James J. Cramer, demanded that the company do something about Telerate, which caused speculation that they might also attempt a takeover. At around this time, Gannett and other media companies, such as NBC, tried to find out if the *Journal* was for sale. It wasn't. The plan to invest several hundred million dollars in Telerate was abandoned—and so, ultimately, was Telerate. In 1998, Dow Jones sold it to Bridge Information Systems for a third of what it had cost. But, even after that, Telerate did not go away. Bridge filed for bankruptcy in February, 2001, leaving Dow Jones the target of continuing creditor lawsuits.

Because of Telerate, the company posted a loss of eight hundred and two million dollars in 1997; in 1998, its profits barely topped eight million. Telerate became a financial straitjacket, denying the company resources that it might have used for other investments. Costs were cut, including, eventually, the helicopter sometimes used by Kann and House. By 1999, though, the outlook was brightening; Dow Jones's earnings were expanding by ten per cent; the *Journal* was so thick with ads from the booming tech and financial sectors that it needed to add a fourth section in order to display them. Kann's decision to charge for the online *Journal* and to jointly invest with Reuters in an electronic news-library retrieval service (now called Factiva) was vindicated. "This is a much more pleasant year to be C.E.O. of Dow Jones," Kann told a reporter at the time.

But the good times didn't last. First,



SHOWTIME Evening rush hour, looking



ing Forty-second Street at the multicolored new buildings and the scrubbed façades of the old. Photograph by Robert Polidori.

the Internet bubble burst, and then the financial sector collapsed, followed by an American—and ultimately global—economic recession. All this was accompanied by the shock of the September 11th attacks. It was like getting hit by “the perfect storm,” Paul Steiger said. Most publications lost advertising, but few suffered as severely as the *Journal*. One of its strengths has been that it is a national publication with an elite business audience. (Only seventeen per cent of *Journal* readers read the *Times*, according to House.) But much of the *Journal*’s advertising is what is known as business-to-business ads, such as I.B.M. touting its business-information systems. And about half of the paper’s advertising has come from just two sectors, technology and financial services, which were the hardest hit by the recession.

Despite such dismal news, Kann did something that most C.E.O.s preoccupied with projecting quarterly profit growth would not have done—he invested more in the newspaper. He approved the spending of two hundred and fifty million dollars to retrofit the *Journal*’s printing plants and tripled color capacity in the paper, adding up to sixteen pages of news and columns in a new, thrice-weekly Personal Journal section. These changes were introduced in April, 2002. “There are a lot of ways to judge a C.E.O.,” Kann says. “One of them, fairly, can be the share price. On the other hand, if you’re trying

to run a company like this, and part of your role is to enhance what the company does best, then I think I have at least helped create an environment where a content company produces great content.”

Kann and the board made two important management changes. The first was the hiring, in 2001, of Richard Zannino, a former Liz Claiborne executive, as chief financial officer, and then promoting him to chief operating officer of the company. The second involved House’s promotion, in 2002, after thirteen years of running the international division, to publisher and senior vice-president of Dow Jones. At Kann’s suggestion, she reports to Zannino rather than to him. Zannino believes that the company needs to be less dependent on the fluctuating profits generated by the *Journal*; House believes that the *Journal* itself needs to find new sources of income—such as attracting more female readers (women compose only one-fifth of *Journal* subscribers), more consumer advertising, and possibly adding a Saturday edition. Last spring, in a move intended to galvanize the sales force, House fired the senior vice-president for sales and marketing, who had recently been hired, and installed a senior Dow Jones executive, Scott D. Schulman, a former Booz Allen management consultant. To her supporters, House’s actions were decisive; to her critics, these moves showed managerial panic, prompting one to say that she had crossed “the

fine line between urgency and anxiety.”

Kann is acutely aware of the negative feelings about his wife. “A certain amount of it you just let pass,” he said, seated at a small conference table beside his desk, flanked by pictures of his daughter, Hillary, who is now thirty and married, and the three children, two of them Korean-born, that he and House adopted. He is aware that he is a target, too. He likes to cook and be home with the kids. “The joke is that Peter sits at home and plans dinner, and Karen goes off and settles the Cold War,” Seth Lipsky said. “It’s a good joke, but it doesn’t pan out. In any circle he’s in, he’s the senior figure.”

Kann says he is untroubled by what might be seen as a form of reverse sexism. “I think you care about what people you care about think,” he said. “You can’t care about what everyone thinks.” Of nepotism concerns, he went on, “You try to insure that neither individual gets any preference. But the flip side of that is that neither is punished because of the relationship. In that context, I’d argue that Karen might well, logically, have gotten further sooner had she not been married to me.”

The *Journal*’s newsroom has its own debates, which came to the surface in June at a two-day retreat for editors and bureau chiefs. Much of what was said was familiar: Should page 1 be a home for feature stories or for breaking news? Was the “softer” news of the Personal Journal section taking space away from serious news? Some worried that the company hadn’t done enough after the murder of Daniel Pearl—either in investigating the killing or in helping his wife, Mariane. Last week, in an interview with the *Washington Post*, she criticized the *Journal*, and said that she had been reimbursed for only ten thousand dollars of a seventy-thousand-dollar legal bill. (Steiger told me, “We continue to seek every opportunity to get and publish a full explanation of what happened.”) A senior Dow Jones executive, while speaking admiringly of Mariane Pearl, said that she had rejected two Pakistani criminal lawyers the company had found for her, whose fees would not have exceeded nine thousand dollars. Mariane Pearl has received about a million dollars in contributions from Dow Jones and other individual and corporate donors.)

Then there was the moment when



“Trick or trample!”

Karen Elliott House cried. At dinner, House spoke, as she had at Boston University, about the importance of independence, of reporters avoiding the press pack. Then she talked about her pride in the newspaper, and her voice broke and tears filled her eyes. "We all looked at her and were befuddled, and silently pleaded, 'Don't cry, girl!'" one female editor recalled. Others remembered that she had cried during the newsroom announcement last spring that the *Journal* had won a Pulitzer. It's a meaningless tic, Paul Steiger insists. "It's like she scratched her ear," he says. "She doesn't lose focus." (House cried on nine occasions during our two interviews. Once, she was describing Steiger, and when I asked why she was crying she struggled to regain her composure and said, "Partly it's because Steiger is a nice guy." Then she choked up again.)

There's one question that did not come up at the retreat but that does in almost every extended conversation with a reporter or editor: Is Dow Jones mismanaged? "While we think this is a great place to be a reporter, the company's actions more and more suggest that we are replaceable and the bottom line is more important than our welfare," Tom Lauricella, a reporter who joined the company in 1992, told me. Lauricella, like other employees, is angry that salaries at the newspaper have been frozen. Ultimately, the question of mismanagement leads back to Kann and his performance. Data compiled by Bloomberg reveal that between the end of July, 1992, the year after Kann became C.E.O., and July, 2003, Dow Jones stock had a total return of 57.3 per cent. In this same eleven-year period, the total return of the S. & P. 500 Publishing and Printing Index, consisting of Dow Jones's media peers, rose more than five times as much. A writer at the *Journal* who attended the Kann-House wedding confesses ambivalence: he thinks that the company could be better run, but that if it were "run by the best managers, who are preoccupied with the bottom line, the journalism would suffer." This person worries about the company's inability to diversify, and blames a cautious corpo-



rate culture: "I don't know why the New York Times bought the Boston *Globe* without us bidding on that. Or why Belo bought the Providence *Journal* without us bidding on that. We know newspapers."

Kann appears to have the continued support of most of the directors. James Ottaway, who recently retired as C.E.O. of the Ottaway Newspapers division but remains a director, calls Kann "a visionary leader" who had the "courage during the last two years of recession" to "take the longer view" and invest to improve the *Journal* and to buy additional community newspapers.

"Given the nature of the institution and the business, I don't know who could have done a better job," Irvine Hockaday, who chairs the board's powerful compensation committee and oversees the annual evaluation of Kann, said. "You could have gone in there and you could have done your cuts, your aggressive cost-management steps, in anticipation of an inevitable downturn, so that you get ahead of the curve. Long-term, that would have been a mistake. If you set aside the Tele-rate situation, given the cyclical nature of the business—the breadth and depth of this economic patch we've been in, the very real interruption for Dow Jones of 9/11, to some extent the Danny Pearl situation, and the steep economic decline in the financial and technology sector, which are revenue pillars—I certainly don't think

this company has been mismanaged or undermanaged. I think this is a company that's been sensitively managed."

Hockaday also said, referring to Kann, "The compensation committee is concerned because we don't want him falling behind the market." Kann refused to accept a bonus last year, because he says it would have been unseemly for him to receive it while employees were being fired. Last year, Kann earned a salary of nine hundred and thirty thousand dollars. (House earned a salary of five hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars, including a bonus that she accepted.) Hockaday went on, "Now, I will also say I think Peter by background is a journalist. I believe he's learned a hell of a lot about the difference between a journalist and a C.E.O. I think he's learned you have to make tough decisions."

When I asked Kann to assess his own performance, he reddened, and said, "I think if you judge a C.E.O. entirely on corporate bottom-line performance, and there is a reasonable argument that that is the way any C.E.O. should be judged, then there will be periods I look pretty good and there will be periods I wouldn't, and this would be one of them." But, he continued, "if you want to put a high premium on things like 'quality' and editorial and business 'integrity' and a sense of 'independence,' and you want to judge how a C.E.O. lives up to those responsibilities



"I much preferred the backstabbing to the paint-balling."

even in a difficult business environment—then I think I probably stack up pretty well."

He gets a more mixed judgment from some Bancroft family members, including Leslie Hill, who said, "It's not been perfect," and added, "He has strengths and weaknesses. Over all, it's a net positive." A less positive evaluation comes from Norman Pearlstine, who says that in the years since he left the *Journal* he has never commented publicly about Dow Jones. Now, when he was asked what grade he would give Kann as a C.E.O., he said, "I think the stock price speaks for itself, as it does here and elsewhere." Of House, he said, "If you asked me whether she would be in this job were she not married to him, I think the answer would be no." Pearlstine went on to say that benign family control subverts Dow Jones as a business: "I don't think you have the kind of meritocracy on the business side that creates superior performance."

Pearlstine concedes that family ownership of the *Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Journal* helps to explain their greatness as newspapers. But he believes that there is an accompanying risk with family control—that a weak business will eventually weaken the journalism. "I guess what I'm saying," Pearlstine went

on, "is that if you have a meeting with Peter Kann and Karen and you really talk to them, you as a journalist would see them as worldly people, engaged with issues. But my guess is it's easier to talk with them about Iraq than about the outlook for newsprint prices."

Donald Graham praised the *Journal's* family ownership, while acknowledging that "many of the worst newspapers in the U.S." are family-owned. "I don't know any members of the Bancroft family, but the Bancroft family ought to take a bow," Graham said, and added, "One of the things you have to grade Peter Kann on is whom he's chosen as editor."

A Bancroft family board member says that choosing Kann's eventual successor is "the biggest issue the board will wrestle with this year." Hockaday calls it "a topic the whole board discusses several times a year. We sit with Peter and get him to describe the attributes he thinks are the most important for a C.E.O. We talk about how to reorganize to give each executive with talent the ability to express himself. We talk about how to get more exposure to Richard Zannino, Gordon Crovitz, and Karen Elliott House." Those are the three executives who are most often discussed, he says, "but there

are other young people whom we don't write off."

If the board is determined to follow tradition and pick a journalist, the choice probably narrows to House or Crovitz, who runs the company's electronic publishing. The conventional wisdom in the newsroom is expressed by Al Hunt: "If you look at this institution, this company always promotes from within and always picks someone with some news background." The board also knows that, in the current economic climate, it is too early to judge House's performance as publisher. Crovitz, who is forty-five, is a Rhodes scholar and Yale Law School graduate who served as editor of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and spent eleven of his twenty-two years at the company working for the editorial page and writing a law column. Yet Crovitz's newsroom experience (five years) was all overseas, and some fellow-executives say that he is indecisive.

House turns fifty-six in December. "I would say by age it's not logical," Kann said of the chances of his spouse succeeding him. "I would also say that I don't think she aspires to that. And I think she is particularly well credentialled for the job she's in." When House was asked if she would like to be C.E.O., she pondered the question and echoed her husband, but did not rule it out: "It's not a decision for me to make. And, if you look at the math, it's not a decision anyone else is likely to make on me. I don't represent a generational change."

If the board chooses a nonjournalist, the leading contender would probably be Zannino, the chief operating officer, who is forty-five. Scott Schulman, the head of sales and marketing, who has been with the company four years and has run several divisions, is also mentioned. Zannino is competent and dynamic, but, as one senior executive says of him, "He's a finance guy. He doesn't understand, in his genetic material, what journalism is about." When Zannino decided not to reopen the cafeteria in One World Financial Center, he looked at the savings, not at the less quantifiable costs of lowered morale and lost contact between managers and reporters who shared the same lunch tables.

There is also the possibility that when advertising perks up—as it did for the first time in three years in the third

quarter, rising seven per cent from July through September and twenty-nine per cent in September—Kann might step down early, clearing a path for House to become the chair of Dow Jones while remaining as publisher. Zannino could then become C.E.O.—which would give each a promotion. This assumes that House and Zannino could work as a team. Something similar happened at the *Times* when Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., was named chairman and publisher and Russell Lewis was anointed C.E.O.

Steiger's successor is of less immediate interest to the board, but these changes are certainly tied to each other. The candidates for Steiger's job, which last year paid him a total of eight hundred and forty-four thousand dollars, including a bonus that he accepted, will not be Barney Calame, who is sixty-four, and is unlikely to be Daniel Hertzberg, a deputy managing editor and Pulitzer Prize winner, who will be sixty-one in four years. Insiders predict that the choice will likely be made from among three people: Joanne Lipman, a deputy managing editor who edits the *Weekend Journal* and oversees the *Personal Journal* section; Stephen Adler, who is the editorial director of the online *Journal* (and also a deputy managing editor); and Marcus Brauchli, the just promoted global news editor. Brauchli has been a correspondent in Europe and Asia for the paper, and has worked closely with House. "He is a rocket," one senior editor said, marvelling at Brauchli's ascent within the newsroom.

Beyond all this, Dow Jones's directors know that the heart of the company's weakness is its reliance on a single division, the *Wall Street Journal*. While the trend among media companies is to get bigger, Dow Jones is smaller today than it was a decade ago.

Roy Hammer acknowledged that Dow Jones is a relatively "tiny" company, and spoke about the potential perils of seeking bigness. "To jeopardize the value of what we have in order to be larger—I just don't see any long-term advantage there," he said. "One can assume that Rupert Murdoch would love to own the *Wall Street Journal*. What is in it for the *Wall Street Journal*? If you set the premise that it's impossible to compete with giants, then the only real alternative is to combine with one of the giants. And if you

do that you've lost your independence.

"To me," Hammer went on, "the idea is to have the family sufficiently diversified that they are less dependent on the *Wall Street Journal* for their income and their resources, but they have a sufficient continuing stake in the company to maintain this sense of stewardship and responsibility." He added, "We have considered various ways of becoming larger. Most of them dilute what makes the *Wall Street Journal* the publication that it is. . . . If we had five times the capital that we now have, and we remained independent and could expand the scope and reach of Dow Jones and the *Wall Street Journal*, it would be great to have that additional capital. We could put it to good use."

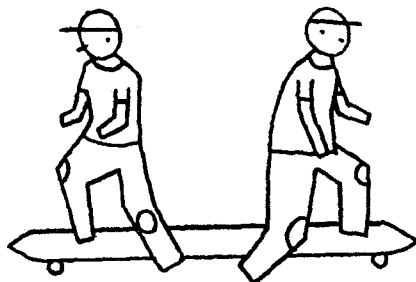
What if a large company wanted to own the *Journal* and made assurances that it would not alter it? "We have had expressions of interest from other papers, from publishing companies who say, 'Why don't we combine and have more size? You'll run your side of things and we'll run our side of it,'" he replied. "Well, what's the point of it? Where's the economies of scale if we're simply taking two companies and combining them as if they were not combined? And when you get into the details there's always a rub—either branding or editorial independence. . . . If the Bancroft family was driven by a desire to increase their wealth, they could always just sell out. Why did they stay with Dow Jones, which is a mature company in a business with limited opportunities, rather than just buying a portfolio of Microsoft and you-name-the-business?"

Because so much is in play—and because some members of the family appear restless—there remains a real possibility that Dow Jones will be sold. There are several forms that a sale could take. If family members wanted to sell their Class A and Class B shares to a friendly party—perhaps the family-controlled *Washington Post*—they are, like any other share-

holder, free to do so. If they swap their shares for stock in the acquiring company, it would be a tax-free transaction. But, if the Bancrofts decided to sell the roughly forty per cent of the company they own, the sale could become an invitation for a public auction—and a hostile takeover. The law is sufficiently murky about whether a company's directors must use the highest dollar bid or can choose other, more subjective grounds. Three family representatives and one outside director say that the Bancrofts and the board would not automatically spurn a sale if the right company came along with the right offer. One family member who worries that the company may be too small said, "The family has to look at what is best for the company."

Usually, companies that have expressed an interest in acquiring or merging with Dow Jones first approach Kann; sometimes they go to Hammer. In either case, the two speak and, a source close to the Bancrofts says, decide whether "the family would be interested enough to take it to the board." This is what happened when Sulzberger made what Kann calls his "soft proposal" to acquire Dow Jones. (One reason that the *Washington Post* is more attractive to some Dow Jones directors is that the *Post* shares few of the *Journal's* readers or advertisers.) In the case of the Sulzberger offer, Hammer did not consult the board. "Once the controlling shareholder"—the family—"says they're not interested, what's the sense of having a long discussion?" Kann said.

Not everyone agrees with that view. As one independent director told me, "There are some of us on the board who understand that if the controlling shareholder is not interested it is hard to do. But I have never felt it was that simple." Sometimes, this director admits, tension between the family and outside directors surfaces, as it did over the quick rejection of the *Times's* overture. With such issues as "board accountability" in the news, some Dow Jones directors were annoyed not to be consulted first. Roy Hammer, this director believes, is naïve, because he doesn't appreciate that he is expected to wear two hats, as a director and as a family trustee. But what if the board wanted to pursue a merger that the Bancrofts opposed? Leaving no doubt who's finally in charge, one family intimate said, matter-of-factly, "The family would replace the board." ♦



LETTER FROM IVORY COAST

GANGSTA WAR

Young fighters take their lead from American pop culture.

BY GEORGE PACKER

From my balcony on the eighth floor of the Hôtel Ivoire, I could see downtown Abidjan across the lagoon in the mist. Skyscrapers rose along the waterfront, a blue neon sign blinked "NISSAN," and the plate glass of the commercial banks reflected the silver afternoon light. At this distance, it was easy to pretend that these skyscrapers weren't emptying out; that the African Development Bank hadn't abandoned the city; that the shipping traffic at the port, on which all West Africa depended for an economic pulse, hadn't dropped by fifty per cent. From the balcony, it still looked like the glamorous capital of twenty years ago, before decline and civil war, when young men and women from all over French-speaking Africa came to Abidjan to seek their future in the city of success.

I was living in a small village in Togo then, two countries east of Ivory Coast; in the evenings, I would listen to the mother of the family in my compound describe the time she had spent in Abidjan as a kind of dream. There was abundant work in Ivory Coast, and foreigners like her were thrilled to find themselves in a truly cosmopolitan city, one where everyone spoke the same Abidjanaise French. The ambitious students in the village school where I taught knew that, short of Paris, Abidjan was the best place to be. An African privileged class of bureaucrats and professionals ate in fine restaurants downtown and kept the night clubs open till all hours. A robust economy based on coffee and cocoa exports employed several million African immigrants to do the manual labor and forty thousand French expatriates to run businesses and advise the government. The French, some of them third- or fourth-generation, enjoyed a slightly updated version of the colonial life. In the eighties, a French teen-ager in Abidjan could celebrate his birthday by racing his moped

around town and then jumping off a bridge into the lagoon, to the cheers of an Ivorian crowd. The French who have remained in Abidjan now call that time *la belle époque*.

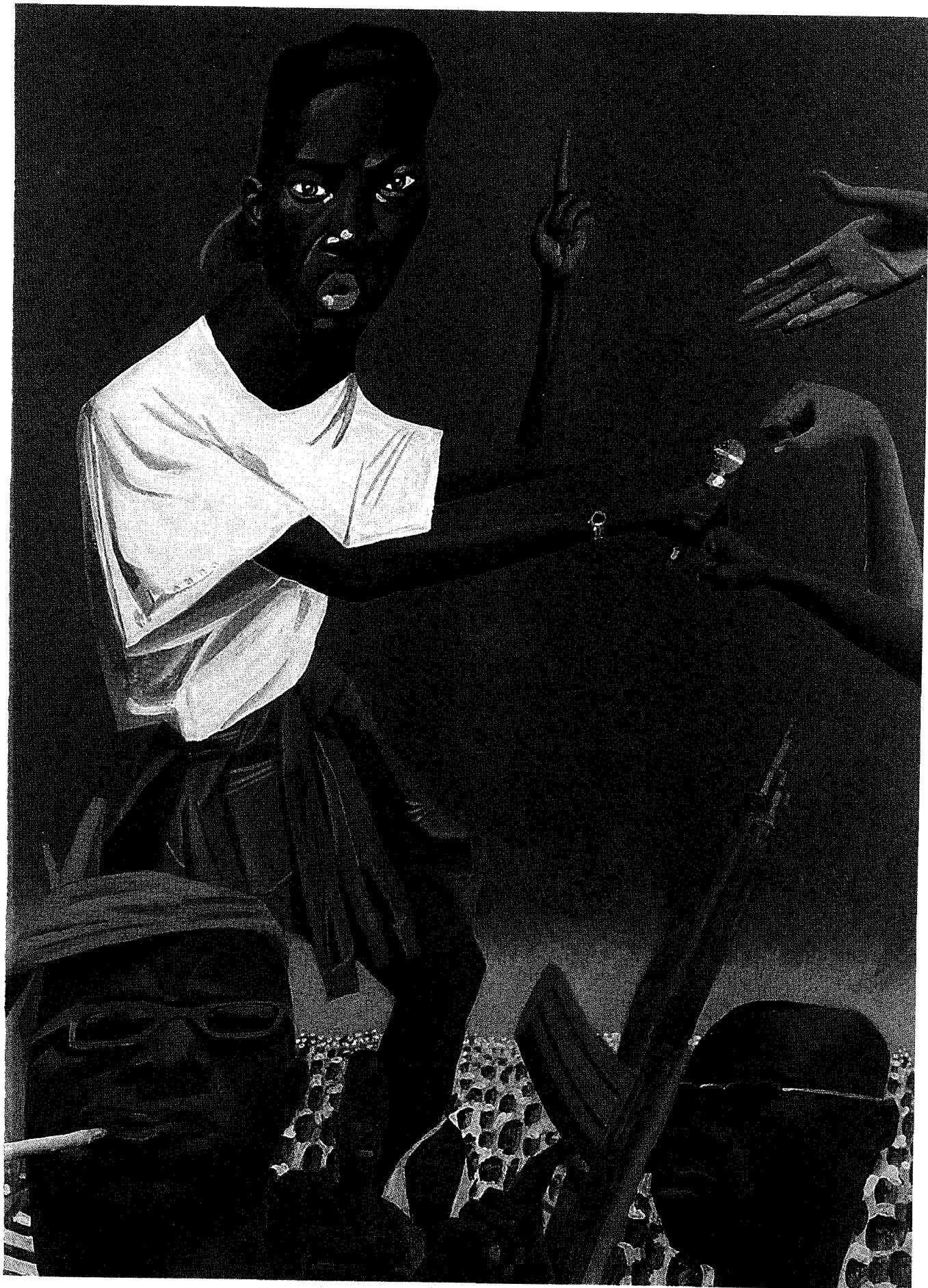
In Togo, I was a Peace Corps volunteer, living in a village without electricity, and one detail I learned about Abidjan struck me as miraculous. The Hôtel Ivoire, I was told, had a large skating rink with ice that kept a perfectly glazed surface even when the temperature outside topped a hundred degrees. The capital also had world-class golf courses, because President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the relatively benign dictator who had led Ivory Coast since its nominal independence from France, in 1960, considered the sport to be a mark of civilization. He had turned his home village of Yamoussoukro, a hundred and twenty-five miles north of Abidjan, into a grand political capital of wide boulevards lined with street lamps. He built a Catholic basilica there that rises out of the palm forests like a hallucination of St. Peter's, of which it is an actual-size replica. He also erected a vast Presidential palace, and surrounded it with man-made lakes that were filled with crocodiles. (Houphouët-Boigny, who died in 1993, is buried in a mausoleum near the cathedral.) While the rest of the region was becoming mired in coups and wars and deepening poverty, social scientists talked about the "Ivorian miracle." The country was one of the most prosperous in Africa, and Ivorians weren't killing one another. The residents of Abidjan said that their country was "blessed by the gods."

As soon as I went down to the hotel's lobby, my vision of old Abidjan began to fade. The skating rink, on the grounds behind the hotel, was closed. An artificial lake that once was dotted with paddleboats had been drained because of chronic scum, and blue paint



The Young Patriots are led by Charles Blé G

MARK UJIKSEN



a sort of urban warlord—nicknamed Machete—who urges an American intervention along the lines of the Iraq invasion.

was peeling off its concrete walls. In the restaurant, a Liberian lounge singer was belting out “Yesterday” and the theme from “Fame” for a handful of lonely white mercenaries and West African peacekeepers and their prostitutes; she had the desperate brio of a resort performer in the off-season. I hailed a taxi, and as I sat in back, listening to my driver—who was garrulous with rage, like most men in Abidjan—complain about the traffic, the heat, the economy, the government death squads, and the ongoing civil war, it was hard to believe that the ovens of the Pâtisserie Abidjanaise, across the Charles de Gaulle Bridge, were still disgorging sheets of warm, perfect baguettes. But so they were.

Abidjan valiantly clings to the idea that it remains the refined city it was twenty years ago. The University of Abidjan, once an impressive institution, now decrepit, continues to turn out thousands of graduates every term for government jobs or foreign scholarships that no longer exist. In the nineties, the French began to restrict immigration and opportunities to study abroad, just after a catastrophic drop in commodity prices plunged Ivory Coast, the world’s largest cocoa producer, into deep debt. Today, Abidjan is populated with educated young men and women who have no outlet for their ambitions. “All the generations until 1985 found work—state work, private work,” Ousmane Dembelé, a social geographer at the university, told me. “All goals were satisfied. But after ’85, ’90, ’95, all these generations of youth in Abidjan could find nothing. Nothing.”

These days, Abidjan looks less like Paris and more like a decaying Third World city. Residents encounter symptoms of decline on every street, from collapsing infrastructure to violent crime. “It’s not Lagos yet,” the financial manager of an architecture firm told me. “But we’re headed straight there.”

The northern part of Ivory Coast is largely Muslim, and poorer than the mostly Christian south, with its cocoa plantations and Abidjan. On September 19, 2002, rebel soldiers from the north mutinied against the government.

The civil war has regional, religious, and economic dimensions, but its basic cause is political. The mutiny was a violent reaction to several years of anti-northern and anti-immigrant policies pursued by the series of southern Presidents who succeeded Houphouët-Boigny. During the 2000 election, the Presidential candidate from the north, a former International Monetary Fund official named



Alassane Ouattara, was disqualified on the dubious ground that he was not of Ivorian parentage. The winner, a history professor named Laurent Gbagbo, from the cocoa region, took office amid riots, during which his supporters killed hundreds of Ouattara’s primarily Muslim followers. Since the civil war

broke out, at least three thousand people have been killed and more than a million have been displaced from their homes. Throughout the conflict, one of the government’s favored weapons has been the rhetoric of xenophobia.

The taxi was taking me to a rally of Ivory Coast’s Young Patriots, a coterie of young men paid by the government to stir up nationalistic feelings against the rebels, who, soon after starting the civil war, occupied the north of the country. The Young Patriots railed with equal intensity against immigrants, blaming them for the country’s soaring unemployment rate.

At the Young Patriots’ rally, I wanted to get a glimpse of their leader, Charles Blé Goudé. The drive to the rally took me near the Place de la République, a public square of cracked concrete, where, in late January, Blé Goudé had spoken to tens of thousands, denouncing the French government for failing to rescue Ivory Coast from the rebels. (France, refusing to take sides, had pushed Gbagbo’s government to reconcile with the insurgent forces.) The iconography of those demonstrations was remarkable. It was virulently anti-French and desperately pro-American. “U.S.A. WE NEED YOU AGAINST THE ‘OLD EUROPE,’” one sign pleaded, just a few days after Donald Rumsfeld coined the term. Blé Goudé waved an American flag and delighted the crowd by refusing to speak French. “Are you ready for English?” he yelled, and the crowd roared as he spoke a few clumsy sentences in the tongue of the superpower, which, in Ivory Coast, is

the language of youthful resistance. The January demonstrations had led to anti-French riots, and thousands of French expatriates fled the country while young Ivorians spat upon them, attacked their businesses and schools, and tried to block the departure of Air France jets from the airport.

The rally this afternoon was in a slum called Port-Bouët, on a waterfront strip near the airport. My driver got lost in Port-Bouët’s labyrinthine streets, which were choked with the blue taxis known as *woro-woro*. About fifteen years ago, the city government of Paris sent Abidjan a fleet of used green-and-white municipal buses, which grew filthy, broke down, and were never replaced or repaired, even as the city’s population exploded. The *woro-woro* run local routes to fill in the gaps, but their drivers are notoriously reckless. We passed clogged roads, shantytowns, and entire neighborhoods without decent water, power, or sewage systems.

The taxi turned a corner, and suddenly there were hundreds of people crowding around the perimeter of a dirt rectangle the size of a football field. This was Place Laurent Gbagbo.

Port-Bouët is a government stronghold. High-rise housing projects in advanced states of decay ringed the field, and residents hung out from the windows, their arms dangling beside their laundry. A young m.c. was warming up the crowd with a call-and-response that always ended in the word *bête*, or “stupid.” The rebels who held the northern half of the country were *bête*. The neighboring countries suspected of arming them, Burkina Faso and Liberia, were *bête*. The immigrants in Abidjan with Muslim names, who supposedly sympathized and even conspired with the rebels, were *bête*. And the French, who had failed to defend their Ivorian brothers and sisters in the hour of crisis—the French were more *bête* than anyone.

For all the hostility in the slogans, the crowd was cheerful, like spectators awaiting the main act of a show they’d seen before. Almost everyone in the crowd was young; most of them clearly had nothing better to do. Boy vendors were selling hats in the national colors, orange and green, with the warning “Don’t Touch Our Country” and T-shirts declaring “Xenophobe—So What?”

In the front row of a tented seating

area were the Young Patriot leaders, local stars in their twenties who were dressed like American hip-hop singers: gold chains, tracksuits, floppy hats. Their scowling bodyguards sat behind them, wearing muscle shirts and mirror glasses; a few were armed with Kalashnikov rifles. Sitting quietly and pathetically in the back rows were the neighborhood elders. In the traditional hierarchy of African villages, the old are elaborately deferred to by the young. Here the elders had no role other than to applaud while the Young Patriots took turns swaggering and jiggling out on the speaker's platform and the loudspeakers blasted reggae or *zouglou*, the homegrown pop music of the movement. A favorite anthem, by a *zouglou* group called the Bastards, was "Sacrificed Generation":

They say students make too much trouble
 They say students go on strike too much
 At the start they took away our
 scholarships
 They made us pay for rooms and meal
 tickets
 Students are poor . . .
 When we present our demands
 They answer us with tear gas . . .
 The big brothers are angry
 The old fathers don't want to get out of
 the way!

Each speaker tried to outdo the last in scabrous wit and extremist views, before boogying back to the tent to touch fists with the others, like an N.B.A. star returning to the bench. At another Young Patriot event, I had heard a heavysset demagogue pronounce the true "axis of evil" to be Liberia, Burkina Faso, and France, and then declare, with malicious irony, "Yeah, I'm Jean-Marie Le Pen!" Meanwhile, at night, immigrants were being hounded from their homes under the pretext that they were supporting the rebels, entire shantytowns had been bulldozed, and the corpses of opposition politicians were turning up at dawn in remote corners of the city. Everyone knew that paramilitary death squads were at work, though no one could prove the rumor that they were directed by the President's wife, Simone, an evangelical Christian with a taste for inflammatory rhetoric against Muslims, immigrants, and whites.

This spring, President Gbagbo, under pressure from France, agreed to include rebel ministers in a new cabinet. In July, the civil war was declared to be over. But late last month rebels started boycotting

meetings of the unity government, and threatened to resume the war. This was fine with the leaders of the Young Patriots, who had thrived during the civil war, making regular appearances on television; many had become national celebrities. These young men have no desire to return to the ranks of the eternal students and the jobless street-corner orators.

Blé Goudé arrived very late, in a convoy. "They're coming! They're coming! I see Charles!" the m.c. informed the crowd. By the time Blé Goudé, his figure lean and tense, made his way with an armed bodyguard to the tent, and then out across the open dirt to the speaker's stand, the moon was rising over Port-Bouët.

Blé Goudé, the son of a peasant from President Gbagbo's region, rose to prominence in the nineties, when he became a leader of the national student movement. The group clashed frequently with police during the chaotic years following Houphouët-Boigny's death, and Blé Goudé was sent to prison many times. At the end of that decade, when the student movement split into two factions, the university campus became the scene of a small war. Blé Goudé, whose side won, earned the nickname Ma-

chete. (He never received a degree, however, though for years he pretended that he had.) The leader of the losing side was Guillaume Soro, an overweight, soft-spoken student from the north. Soro is now the political leader of a major rebel group, the Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast. The country's destiny is being shaped by former students who have never held a job.

Blé Goudé took the speaker's platform. He was wearing baggy green army pants, a tank top, an Adidas pull-over tied around his waist, and a black baseball cap with the bill turned up—the imitation-gangsta style of the Young Patriots. But he didn't strut; his hungry, liquid eyes and knowing smile projected the self-containment of a leader. As he spoke, darkness fell, and gradually he became a disembodied voice. He didn't shout, unlike the others; his was a deep, calm voice.

Blé Goudé denied press reports that he was getting rich off his leadership of the Young Patriot movement. "They don't understand that some people fight for their beliefs," he said. "They think everyone can be bought. They say my belly is getting bigger." Shrieks of laughter rose from the crowd as he patted his



"God damn it, Walter—I'm not even indicted yet!"



"I've discovered a timing device on my wall."

flat stomach. "All this stuff about xenophobia and exclusion is just a cover," he said. "The Ivorian youth is showing the whole world its attachment to democratic principles. I'm not just talking about the Ivory Coast of today. I'm talking about the generation that will rule Ivory Coast. Because the little kids of ten or eight all say France is no good."

Other Young Patriots had been funnier and nastier. But when Blé Goudé finished speaking and the music started up, the crowd swarmed around him. For a moment, he had actually made them feel that the future was theirs.

The Young Patriots represent a new kind of African success story. They're celebrated by many young people in Abidjan for beating and cheating a system gone rancid. With the corrupt "old fathers" refusing to get out of the way, and with all the old channels to success—emigration, foreign study, state employment, family connections—blocked, the

new hero is a young trickster with a talent for self-promotion. The model is no longer the formal bureaucratic style of the French colonizer; it's the loud, unrestrained style that everyone in Ivory Coast calls American.

When Blé Goudé drives around Abidjan in his armed two-car convoy—Renault in front, four-by-four behind—he's saluted as "the General of the Youth." According to one well-connected Frenchman I spoke with, the government, at the height of the demonstrations in January, was giving Blé Goudé eighty thousand dollars a week to distribute to his fellow Young Patriots and their crowds of followers. I was told by a Western diplomat that he runs a Mob-style racket in the campus dorms, taking a cut off the illegal lodging of students, who sleep two to a cot or on the floor. Blé Goudé has become a sort of urban warlord.

He hasn't completely grown into his success, however. When I sat down to

talk with him over lunch, it was in his mother's underfurnished cinder-block house, across a rutted dirt road from a small shantytown. Blé Goudé was wearing gray socks monogrammed with his initials, "CBG" (a friend had made him ten pairs), and, along with half a dozen hangers-on, he was eating the peasant dish of rice and sauce.

"Our elders deceived us," he told me. "Our predecessors, the political leaders and others, have shown us clearly that our future doesn't matter. That's why I've organized the Ivorian youth. To give it a political arm."

Blé Goudé says he is thirty-one; others claim he is older. In his mother's living room, without the charmer's smile I had seen in Port-Bouët, he looked hard-featured and edgy. He said that he was tired from his work, but he mustered the energy to urge an American intervention in his country along the lines of the Iraq invasion—a request that his followers had presented to an American

official outside the United States Embassy. Blé Goudé hoped to exploit the Franco-American rift over Iraq, and he explained that Ivory Coast's struggle was the same as America's: for democracy and against terrorism. The rebellion of September 19, 2002, splintered Ivory Coast, and to him the connection with 9/11 was obvious. "There's only eight days' difference," he pointed out.

"And a year."

"And a year. That's all. It's the same thing. Only it wasn't helicopters here, that's all. It wasn't the World Trade Center, that's all. So, *voilà*—the connection."

I asked whether he thought Americans even knew what was going on in Ivory Coast. He didn't respond, but it was clear that the youth of Ivory Coast thought they knew what was going on in America.

"Even if the United States didn't colonize our country, they should come to our assistance," he said. "Ivory Coast is a land to be taken. Above all, the generation today has been educated in the American spirit. The American spirit is freedom. The American spirit is integrity in action." Blé Goudé extended his arm in front of him. "When the U.S. says what they'll do, they do it. They don't say one thing at night and the opposite the next day, like the French." It was just as true, he said, of the American celebrities worshipped in Ivory Coast, like Mike Tyson and Jay-Z. "Boxing has no tricks in it. When someone hits you, he hits you. Basketball—it's all straight up and down. Rap comes out of the ghetto, to convey the suffering of the young people there. When they sing, you listen, and the message comes straight at you."

In the eyes of Blé Goudé and the Young Patriots, Amadou Guindo is the enemy. Guindo, an immigrant's son, lives in Koumassi, another Abidjan slum, separated from Port-Bouët by a land bridge across the lagoon. It smells of oranges and sewage. Because there is a high concentration of northerners and foreigners in Koumassi, the government regards it as a hotbed of rebel sympathy. One morning, a month after the war began, several gendarmes stormed down an alleyway, entered a cinder-block compound where the landlady was washing clothes, and broke down Guindo's door. (He happened to be out.) The landlady convinced

the gendarmes that it was a case of mistaken identity, but not before they had rifled through all his belongings.

Guindo, thirty-three years old and unemployed, is known as Cool B, for Cool Boy. On the wall above his bed hung a large American flag; overhead, taped to the low ceiling panels, were posters for B movies like "War Dog" and "The Arrival." A Richard Wright novel was on his bedside table, next to CDs by Stevie Wonder and R. Kelly. Outdoors, when he cruised the crowded dirt roads of the neighborhood he calls *mon ghetto*, where someone yelled out his name every few yards and the teen-age prostitutes approached to flirt and the guys sitting in doorways exchanged fist-to-chest salutations with him, Cool B, his head shaved and his eyes concealed behind a pair of Ray-Bans, carried himself in a manner that he called "the American style." It bore a close resemblance to the style of the young men on the other side of the conflict. Cool B told me that ninety per cent of the young people in Abidjan imitate the American style, which he defined as "total independence. Liberty to express yourself. Economic independence, too. A way of talking and walking." And he demonstrated by sauntering up the road with a novel combination of the pimp roll and the keep-on-truckin' stride.

Though he has spent his entire life in Ivory Coast, Cool B is technically a citizen of Mali, to the north, where his father comes from. This is how he acquired Malian citizenship: One night in 1996, Cool B was walking through his ghetto in the company of his German girlfriend, Petra, when a group of policemen approached and demanded his papers. He produced his Ivorian identity card (his father had had him naturalized when he was sixteen), but this only enraged the police. "Amadou Guindo," one of them said, seeing that the name was foreign. "What name is that?"

"It's my name."

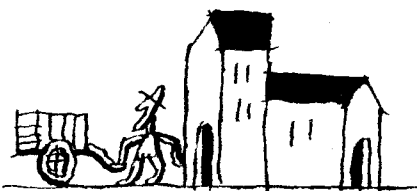
The police pocketed Cool B's card and told him to come with them to the

station. When he asked why, they fell on him and handcuffed him. His white girlfriend's presence seemed to provoke them to ridicule, Cool B recalled. "I said, 'It's because of my name you arrest me, you humiliate me. O.K., you don't have to be Ivorian to be happy in life. Go shit with my card, I don't give a fuck. From now on, I'll keep the nationality of my parents.'" Instead of going to the police station to ask for his card back and suffer more abuse, he took citizenship from the Malian Embassy. "I'm proud of it," he said. "I know nothing of Mali. But if I try to get Ivorian nationality they'll humiliate me every time."

Cool B speaks with a slight stutter, and as he told me this story, in the privacy of his sweltering ten-foot-square room, the stutter grew more pronounced, his crossed leg jiggled, and the lines deepened in his face, which, with the Ray-Bans off, looked older than his years. Stripped of the American style, he seemed vulnerable, as if he were trying to ward off disappointment.

In 1996, the same year Cool B became a "foreigner," a new word emerged on the political scene in Abidjan: *ivoirité*. The English equivalent that best captures the word's absurdity might be "Ivoryness." In practice, *ivoirité* meant that immigrants were subjected to harassment and shakedowns and restrictive new laws. Ivorians from the north, who tend to share family names and the Muslim faith with immigrants from Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso, came in for similar treatment. If a single word can be said to have started a war, *ivoirité* started Ivory Coast's.

Cool B's father worked as a nurse in Abidjan for thirty years before retiring and returning to Mali, in 1991. Cool B didn't go beyond high school—instead, he pursued an early career in what he calls *voyousie*, or the hoodlum life. The scale of his activities was small, but he made it a habit to insult pretty much everyone who crossed his path. "The troublemaker doesn't know why he makes trouble," he said. "He's just proud of himself. He has a certain pride." One day in 1990, when Cool B was in high school, a Frenchman came to his drawing class and asked the students to do illustrations showing the proper use of condoms. Cool B found the assignment foolish, and at the end of the class he stood in the



doorway to block the Frenchman's exit. "You're going around the world showing people pictures of how to use condoms?" Cool B asked mockingly. "I'll show you what to do." He snatched away the man's prospectus and, reading from the text, improvised an anti-AIDS rap on the spot in the manner of LL Cool J.

The Frenchman was impressed. Within a couple of days, he had arranged for Cool B to record the rap at a downtown night club, and the song made him a momentary celebrity among Abidjan youth. It also began his long association with white people—among them Petra, his girlfriend, who eventually went back to Germany, and Eliane de Latour, a French filmmaker who employed him for a while as a researcher on a feature about Abidjan youth. Cool B keeps pictures of them on his wall, and he tries to figure out why, in spite of these connections, he remains stuck in Koumassi. He spends his ample free time and his limited funds at a local Internet café, surfing international dating sites and chat rooms where people he knows have found marriage opportunities that got them out of Africa. Or he visits a green-card lottery Web site. His ambition, short of leaving Africa, is to open his own Internet café.

"I don't understand my situation," he said. "I'm still blocked. I want to get out of my problems one day. I don't have the totality of independence." Cool B's residence permit expired last year, making him an illegal alien in the only country in which he has ever lived.

When the room grew too hot for us to stay inside, even with a fan blowing, we went around the corner to pay a visit to Cool B's gang. A dozen young men were seated on facing benches under a ramshackle tin roof; they spent twelve hours a day there, like a conclave of village elders, except that Cool B was the oldest person in the group. The others regarded him with respect and sought his advice. They were all immigrants or northerners, keeping an eye out for the police. They wore gold chains, tank tops, and Nike caps. When I asked what kind of work they did, most of them replied, "Tent rental," which began to seem like a euphemism for unemployment, though some of them had part-time work fencing stolen goods.

At noon, a communal basin of rice

and sauce appeared, and the young men plunged their right hands into it. The gang argot of Abidjan, which combines French, profane English, and the language of Ivory Coast's north, is called Nushi, or "mustache," a reference to the way bad guys look in Hollywood movies. The inferior type of rice that Cool B and his friends had to eat is derisively referred to in Nushi as *deni kasha*, or "lots of children." The young men all came from poor and enormous polygamous families in which there were as many as thirty-five siblings. "That's what spoiled our future," a surly fellow with a shaved head told me. "When our parents worked, they didn't think of us first. In Europe, they set up an account to help the kids when they grow up, right?"

This was the story they all told: fathers who did nothing for their sons, extended families that might have made sense in a rural village but crushed the life out of them here in the city. Cool B's closest friend in the group was a rangy twenty-five-year-old, wearing wire-rim glasses, who introduced himself as McKenzie. He'd taken the name from a character in an action movie. Growing up in a northern town called Odienné, McKenzie (whose real name is Morifère Bamba) used to watch American Westerns on a communal TV. John Wayne made a particularly strong impression. These movies lit a desire to live in his "dream country" which remains McKenzie's sole ambition.

At twelve, he quit school—his mother was dead, his father too poor to support him—and the next year, 1990, he came alone to Abidjan. I asked how he had imagined the city then. "It was the city

of success," McKenzie said. "The city that would give me the ability to realize my dream." Abidjan was a way station on his escape route to America. This, I thought, was the difference between Cool

B's gang and the Young Patriots: they all copied the American style, but the Young Patriots had found a way to make it work for them in Abidjan.

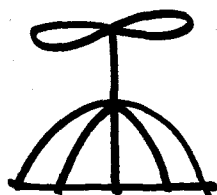
After a few years in the city of success, McKenzie realized that he was entirely alone. "Succeed how?" he said. "You have to have lots of connections and acquaintances. Guys go into banditry to realize their success." McKenzie joined a gang,

began smoking cocaine, fought, stole, and saw a friend die at the hands of the police. Movies like "Menace II Society," which seemed to glamorize the gangster life, finally convinced him that it was a dead end. McKenzie left the gang and learned the electrician's trade, at which he worked irregularly, trying to save money for the trip to America, until the war started and jobs disappeared altogether.

The war was out there somewhere. In Abidjan, a ten-o'clock curfew enforced by gendarmes at roadblocks had shut down night life, but the city was no longer a conflict zone. It was hard to believe that a couple of hundred miles away, in the interior, teen-age militias were machine-gunning children and cutting old men's throats. Like so many African wars, Ivory Coast's had degenerated into looting and massacres by bands of loosely controlled, generally underage fighters; it became part of a larger conflict that had been spreading through the region for years—ever since the outbreak of Liberia's civil war, in 1989—producing hundreds of thousands of corpses and millions of refugees.

Seen from a distance, Africa's man-made disasters look senseless. But to the participants, who tend to be young and poor, these wars have meaning. The war in Ivory Coast began as a struggle over identity—over the question that haunted Cool B, the question of who gets to be considered Ivorian. The country's decline made identity a political issue, but it also extends to the larger, almost existential question of what it means to be a young African living in the modern world.

After a week in Abidjan, I drove north, to Bouaké, Ivory Coast's second-largest city and the main rebel command center. Behind the ceasefire line patrolled by French and West African peacekeeping troops, the town hadn't seen fighting in months. At rebel headquarters, in a former nursing school, a polite, bored young official was doing a Yahoo search for Uzis and grenades. Out on the half-empty streets, every civilian vehicle had been commandeered, license plates had been removed, doors had been ripped off, and young rebels had painted the sides of the vehicles with Spider-Man logos and self-styled unit names: Delta Force, Highway of Death.



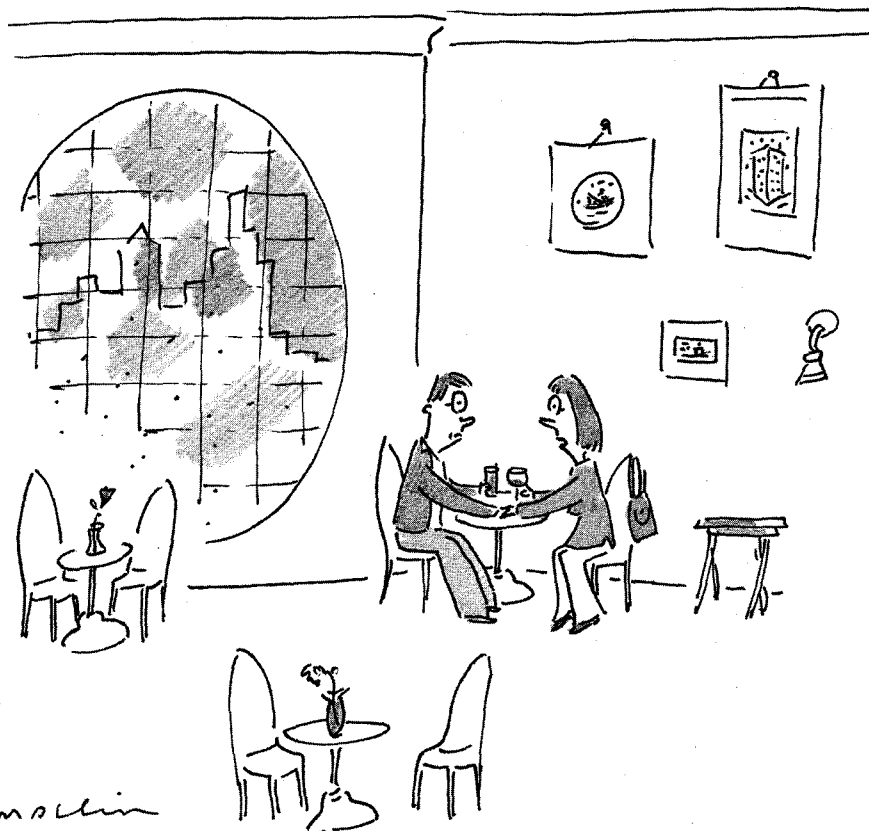
Without a war to fight, they were turning into gangsters.

At the hospital, the staff of Doctors Without Borders reported that the most serious injuries were sustained by the young rebels who routinely smashed up cars or accidentally shot themselves in the foot. One night while I was in Bouaké, a notoriously violent young commander named Wattao threw himself a lavish birthday party, with a fawning m.c., cameramen, hundreds of guests who watched themselves live on video screens, and gate-crashers who ended up exchanging gunfire.

The rebel military leadership, which had maintained fairly good discipline since the outbreak of hostilities, was turning to a local priest called Abbé Moïse to rehabilitate the restless underage recruits. "They haven't killed a lot," the Abbé told me. "They're recoverable here. The children of Bouaké aren't as traumatized as those in the west."

That was where the real war was taking place. In November, 2002, two new rebel groups had suddenly appeared near the Liberian border. The western groups claimed an alliance with the northern rebels, but they had no clear political motivation, and their rebellion quickly took on the violent, anarchic quality of Liberia's and Sierra Leone's civil wars. In fact, some experts have concluded that the western rebellion was the inspiration of Liberia's President, Charles Taylor, who has had a hand in all the region's murderous and intertwined wars, organizing and arming rebels in Sierra Leone and Guinea as well as terrorizing his own country for a decade and a half, until his forced departure this past August. Although Taylor is out of power, the widespread instability he fomented won't dissipate in West Africa anytime soon. The region is now populated with young fighters who float from country to country, looking for war.

The conflict in the west was a catastrophe. Both the rebels and the government were recruiting Liberian mercenaries to do their fighting. The Ivory Coast government also used MI-24 helicopter gunships with Eastern European or South African mercenary crews; the rebels used the feared Sierra Leonean warlord Sam (Mosquito) Bockarie and his battle-hardened teen-age fighters. (Bockarie was killed in Li-



"I've been thinking, Neil, I'd really like to get to know you less."

beria in early May, most likely on the orders of Taylor, against whom he might have testified at the war-crimes court in Sierra Leone, which had indicted him in March.) Hundreds of civilians were being slaughtered in western Ivory Coast, and entire villages had been looted and left empty. It was in the west that the "Ivorian miracle" met its final demise and Ivory Coast became just another West African nightmare.

Before the civil war broke out, the journey from Bouaké to Man, the biggest town in the west, took eight or nine hours. It took me two days, because I had to pass through at least fifty roadblocks. In some places, there was a roadblock every quarter mile. They were makeshift affairs: a tree limb, pieces of junked machinery, concrete blocks. The boys on guard roused themselves from the shade of a tree. When they noticed a white face in the car, they put on angry expressions and went back to grab their AK-47s. Glowering behind sunglasses, they stalked over to the car, fingers on triggers. Around their necks hung leather thongs with pol-

ished wooden or stone amulets, which they believed made them bulletproof. Carved fetish figurines stood guard alongside the roadblock. The boys ordered me to open the trunk, they pretended to search inside, they demanded to see my travel permit. A standoff: everything was in order, but they hadn't given the signal to go, and they had the guns. This last detail made all the difference, yet I found it hard to accept the obvious power relation. Most of them looked the age of the middle-school village boys I had taught twenty years ago in Togo. Those boys had called me Monsieur and left presents of papaya at my door. It was as if I had come back to the region to find all my students armed and snarling, ordering me to get out of the car.

I tried to talk my way through the roadblocks in the old jokey Peace Corps way. And it usually worked: the boys' faces softened, the barked orders turned into requests for cigarettes or money or aspirin, which were only half serious and then even a bit sheepish, and, as the car started rolling forward, we exchanged

a thumbs-up, and a boy began giving me breezy compliments—"If you Americans were here, we'd already be in Abidjan!"—as if the guns had just been props and everything were friendly between us.

The farther west I drove—past the ripe anacard-fruit trees that no one was tending and the storehouses of cotton that couldn't be sold and the carcasses of vehicles that the rebels had wrecked and abandoned—the less useful my Peace Corps skills became. In Man itself, picturesquely nestled in a ring of steep green mountains with waterfalls, the boys at the roadblocks, drunk or high, muttered about stealing the car. Pickup trucks bristling with Liberians carrying rocket-propelled grenade launchers slalomed wildly through the rebel army's obstacle courses. The walls of government buildings were bullet-riddled, and the freshly turned mass graves gave off a sharp smell. It was hard to tell who was in charge of Man—the rebel commanders or their underage Ivorian and Liberian recruits, who, according to townspeople, were becoming indistinguishable.

In the middle of town, the young rebels hung out at a *maquis*, or open-air eatery, called the Tirbo, which smelled of porcupine stew. The youngest I saw, toting his AK-47, was no more than

nine. I ordered a plate of rice and looked around. A boy with a red checked kaffiyeh on his head was staring straight ahead, filled with some private rage. Draped around the necks of other boys were leather clubs or sheathed knives or bandoliers. There was no one over thirty in sight.

At midday, a group of four Liberians arrived and sat down at a table. The young men, who propped their weapons between their legs, began making their way through a bottle of Mangoustan's rum. Their names were Sha, Shala, Johnson, and Romeo. Shala wore an American-flag bandanna, Rambo style. Sha, the most intoxicated of the group, lifted his shirt to show me his wounds.

I asked how much he was paid for his services to the rebels.

"The cause is much more important than pay," Sha said. "I don't appreciate pay."

What was the cause?

"Peace and unity in Africa," he said.

After the war, Sha said, he wanted to go to New York and become an American marine and learn to fly helicopters and use heavy weapons. "I love America," he slurred, making an effort to lean forward. "America is my culture." He waved his glass at the others. "All of them love America."

Romeo's glass fell to the floor and shattered. He stared at the fragments without moving. Johnson told the waitress that they would pay for it. Romeo slouched, sunk in a dark mood.

A few months earlier, a recruiter had come to a refugee camp along the Liberian border and persuaded Romeo to join the rebels. There was no better offer on the horizon. "I want something because I don't want to be suffering, I don't have nowhere to go," he said. "Someone say, 'Take money, go to war. You will not go there? You will go.'" He turned his dead-eyed stare on me. "If you can't pay the young stuff, the war will go all over the world. The war will enter America—let me tell you today. Because you don't give them money. The man we want to see is bin Laden. We want to see him, to join him. Because he can pay revolutionaries. You think you can get pay for this?" Romeo held up his left calf to show me a bullet wound. "You can't. Bin Laden can pay it."

I had seen bin Laden's face painted on the side of a rebel vehicle. Some fighters wore T-shirts with bin Laden's face and Bush's face side by side. In this part of the world, there was no ideological contradiction. Both men stood for power.

At a hospital in a town not far from Man, an Italian doctor named Albert Brizio described the imagery of this war as "a perverse effect of globalization," adding, "It's what I call the Liberianization of war." Brizio had seen the effect in other African countries: young fighters styling themselves after performances, often brutal ones, that they'd seen on TV or in movies. "It allows people to see events or situations they would never have thought of, and they imitate them. These situations have always been contagious, but then you had contagion by contact. Now you have contagion by media."

But contagion by media can go in both directions, as I discovered when I met a young woman in Man named Jeanette Badouel. She was moving around town in the company of rebels, but, unlike the handful of girl recruits in their ranks, she carried herself with an air of blithe authority and pop stylishness. Jeanette was impossible to miss: decked out in sparkly gold jeans labelled "Pussy" and rolled to the calf, six-inch platform shoes, and a pink frilly blouse; her hair was dyed blond and done in short



"It's your health."

braids. She shopped for her Liberian-made American-style T-shirts and shoes at Saturday markets along the border, which was one of the most dangerous places on earth. She was born in a village twenty miles south of Man but had been living with her French husband and their children in Rennes, where she directed a nonprofit group called Association Mé-tissage, whose Web site says that it “realizes projects favoring cultural diversity and solidarity among peoples.” When the western rebellion broke out, just as Jeanette was visiting her parents in Man, she refused the French government’s offer of evacuation and decided to set up a rebel television station, using the digital equipment she happened to have brought. Though she claimed to operate free of political interference, it was clear that TV Grand Ouest served up pro-rebel propaganda to the region, if anyone was watching.

I sat in the station’s bug-filled studio with Jeanette and watched programming. There was a traditional dance, performed to express villagers’ happiness with rebel rule, the voice-over explained. There were Eddie Murphy movies. And there was footage of the aftermath of a recent massacre by government and Liberian forces—the hacked and bullet-ridden bodies of peasants lying in houses and on roads just south of Man—with Jeanette conducting breathless interviews.

I had trouble figuring Jeanette out. She loved fashion and reading *Paris Match*, yet rebel-held Man seemed to suit her fine. The rebellion looked to her like a wonderful example of cultural diversity and solidarity among peoples. It was almost like America. “For me, it’s democracy,” she gushed. “Everyone is here—the Liberians are everywhere. You’ll see a lot on the way to the border. Guineans, Malians. For me, it’s the people.”

Twenty years ago, V. S. Naipaul published an essay in this magazine called “The Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro,” an account of life in Ivory Coast at the height of the “miracle” under Houphouët-Boigny. Toward the end of the piece, Naipaul has a dream: the bridge on which he is standing starts to melt away. The concrete and steel of Abidjan turn out to be perishable. “The new world existed in the minds of other men,” he writes. “Remove those

men, and their ideas—which, after all, had no finality—would disappear.”

Naipaul’s prophecy that Ivory Coast would slip back into a primordial past seemed comforting compared with the new reality that was taking hold. Cool B and his gang, and the Young Patriots, and the rebels in the north and the west are severed irrevocably from the traditional sources of meaning—the village, the elders, the extended family—that I found in West Africa two decades ago. Their heroes are American celebrities, local warlords, gangsters, and demagogues. In the cities and the ragtag armies, they live in a society consisting of only the young. Tempted and tormented by images and words from elsewhere, trapped in a money economy with nothing to sell, they have no ready way of realizing their desires. But they can’t go back. To some hardheaded observers in the West, they are “loose molecules,” mindless forces of anarchy or a new primitivism. In fact, the opposite is true: the struggle in Ivory Coast, and perhaps in other parts of Africa, is recognizable as the unlovely effort of individuals to find an identity and a place in a world that has no use for them.

In Abidjan, I spoke with Ruth Marshall-Fratani, a researcher with the French journal *Politique Africaine*. “The gap between aspirations and possibilities—I think that gap has widened incredibly in the last fifteen years,” she said. “Access to global images has increased it amazingly.” The phrase she borrowed to describe the situation of the young Africans I had met was *lèche-vitrines*—window-licking. “It isn’t window-shopping,” she explained. “That means you can go in and buy. This is just licking the window. And, basically, that’s this generation’s experience.” She went on, “Everybody wants to get a part of the action. They have these aspirations and they’re not prepared to give them up. Politics is one way. Religion is another. And war is another.”

On one of my last days in Ivory Coast, I went back to Koumassi to see Cool B. He wanted to introduce me to two young men he knew. Madness and Yul, twenty-six and twenty-three, had both done time in prison and had the razor scars to prove it. Madness, whose

real name is Mohamed Bamba, had been on the street since the age of twelve, working as a petty thief and drug dealer. His eyelids were heavy and his voice slow from years of smoking heroin. Yul, born Issouf Traore, hustled stolen pharmaceuticals. Both of them were trying to go straight as barkers at a *woro-woro* station, snagging passengers for local runs. Cool B, Madness, Yul, and I sat in a *maquis* and drank Guinness. Madness was stoic; Yul, whose nickname came from his shaved head, grew frantic as he talked. It was the same story I’d heard from the others—a father who hadn’t taken care of him. “He told me, ‘If you come back here I’ll put you in prison again.’ I



said, ‘You’re my father, you put me in the world.’” What agitated Yul to distraction was the fact that his father had gone back to Mali and died and been buried before they could reconcile. “He died when it still wasn’t O.K. with us. He spoke to me, but I don’t know what was at the bottom of his heart.”

From his trouser pocket Yul withdrew a piece of folded officialdom. It wasn’t proof of citizenship—his father had failed to naturalize him. Nor did Yul have Malian papers. But when his girlfriend gave birth, Yul, who never attended school, needed to establish himself as the legal father. He bribed the police to give him a document stating, falsely, that he had lost his identity card. The document was called a “Certificate of Declaration of Loss.” It wasn’t sufficient to confer his last name on his son, but it was the sum of Yul’s identity in Ivory Coast.

“A man has to have a father at his side to help him. If he doesn’t—” Yul stared at me a bit wildly, his toothy mouth open. “Who’s going to help me? Who? I don’t see.”

Madness said calmly, “If you talk to a thousand youths, there isn’t one who will tell you it’s going O.K. for him.”

I asked Madness and Yul what they imagined Americans thought of them.

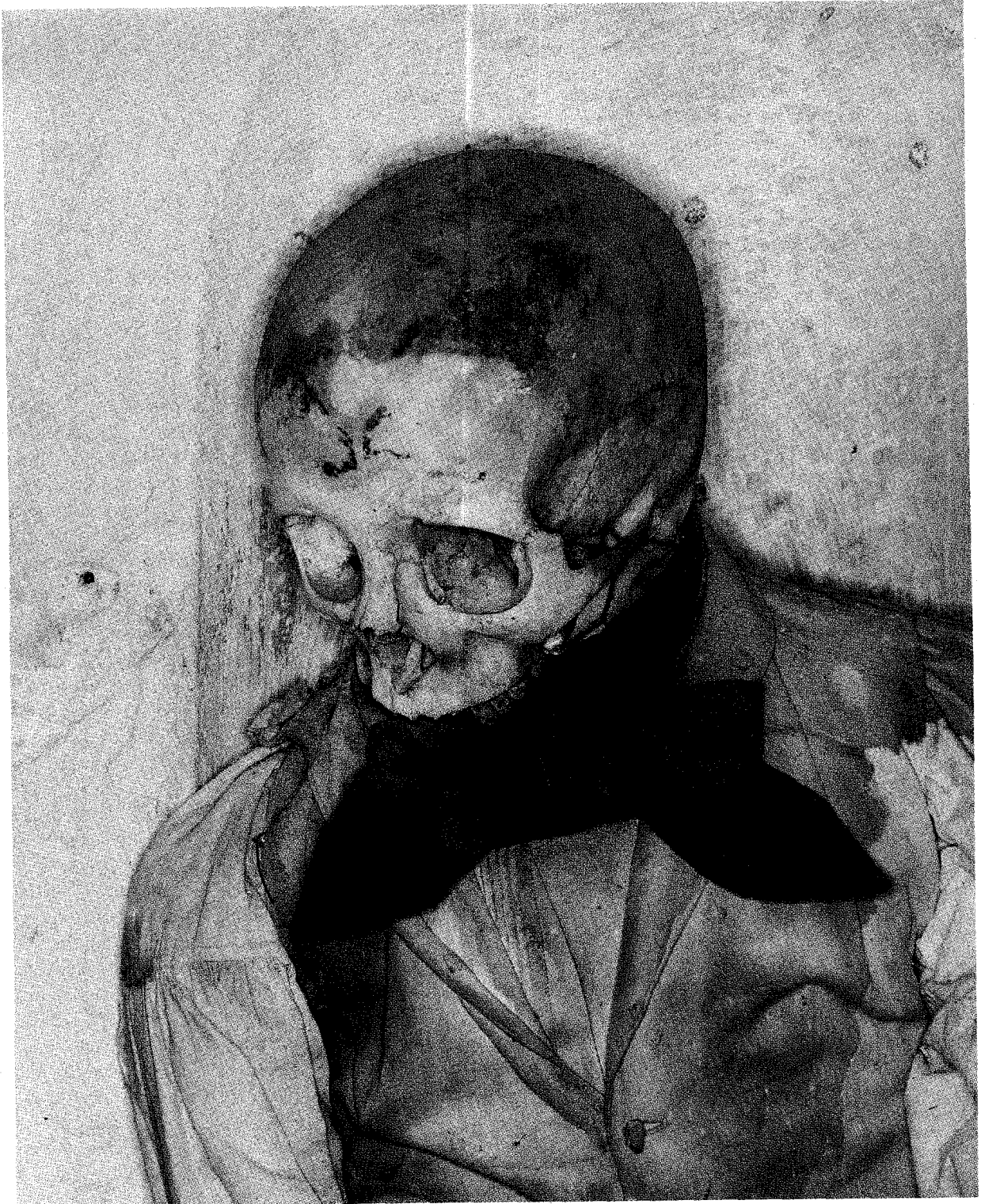
“They’ve forgotten us,” Yul said.

“They don’t know what we’re living here in Africa,” Madness said. “Africa is misery. Africa—really—it’s hard, hard, hard. People of good will are interested in us. But there are others, with means, who aren’t interested at all. Because Africa—it’s a continent of hell.” ♦

FICTION

HAVE YOU SEEN THE STOLEN GIRL?

BY TONY EARLEY



Jesse James, while hiding from the law in Nashville in 1875, lived for a time at the address where Mrs. Virgil Wilson's house now stood. For years, Mrs. Wilson delighted in telling trick-or-treaters about the outlaw, but then one Halloween she noticed that the trick-or-treaters did not seem to know—or care—who Jesse James was. They also wore costumes that she didn't recognize and that had to be explained to her—mass murderers, dead stock-car racers, characters from movies she'd never heard of, teenage singers seemingly remarkable only for their sluttiness—and she realized that she had somehow become the crazy old lady whose tedious stories you had to endure in order to get the disappointing candy that such crazy old ladies invariably offered. For how many years, she asked herself, had she been boring children with her tales of Jesse James, and for how many years had they been laughing at her as they walked away? Every Halloween since then, Mrs. Wilson had sat in her kitchen in the dark, listening to the radio at low volume and pretending she wasn't home.

Still, even though several years had gone by since she'd last opened her door on October 31st, Mrs. Wilson found herself wondering whether the stolen girl had ever trick-or-treated at her house. "The stolen girl" was how local television reporters had come to refer to Angela B——, age thirteen, who had vanished while walking from her house, at one end of Mrs. Wilson's block, to the school-bus stop, at the other. No matter how hard she tried, Mrs. Wilson could not picture the smiling young face she saw on television (and in store windows and stapled to telephone poles and taped to the back windows of pickup trucks and blown up and plastered on the sides of Metro buses) on her own front porch. Whenever, during station breaks, the announcer posed the question "Have you seen the stolen girl?" Mrs. Wilson blinked at the girl's school picture, then shook her head, because she honestly couldn't say.

She liked to imagine that she had once opened her door and found Angela (she would not have been stolen then, so her name would still have been Angela) standing there, waiting patiently, dressed as—what?—a mouse, perhaps, or a rabbit, something soft and nonthreatening. She imagined that she had given Angela not just one or two miniature chocolate bars,

as was her habit, but the whole bag—because Angela was clearly such a nice girl and she listened so attentively while Mrs. Wilson told her about Jesse James. She even asked questions. Mrs. Wilson tried not to imagine anything after the point where Angela said thank you and turned to walk away, because the thought of the stolen girl stepping off her porch and disappearing into the darkness inevitably brought tears to her eyes.

Because the house where Mrs. Wilson lived was equidistant from the stolen girl's house and the bus stop that the stolen girl hadn't reached, it seemed to her to have been marked as the place between Point A and Point B where the unknowable existed and the unthinkable occurred. A black hole, the Bermuda Triangle of East Nashville. Four days after the stolen girl disappeared, and three days after Mrs. Wilson told two uniformed police officers what little she could, a Metro detective—a sober black woman whose air of professional detachment made Mrs. Wilson even sadder for the stolen girl than she already was—had sat on Mrs. Wilson's good sofa and asked her if she was *sure* she hadn't seen anything suspicious. Outside, a TV reporter was broadcasting a live report, which Mrs. Wilson and the detective both glanced at from time to time on Mrs. Wilson's muted television. Later, other police officers had searched the garage and underneath the house for the stolen girl's body. (One of them had wriggled out of the crawl space beneath the porch clutching a beautiful cut-glass doorknob, which he solemnly presented to Mrs. Wilson.) The candlelight prayer vigil and neighborhood march organized by the stolen girl's church had stopped in front of her house and sung "Where You Lead Me I Will Follow." Not knowing what else to do, Mrs. Wilson blinked her porch light on and off in what she hoped was a show of solidarity. For days on end, her view of the street was blocked by the satellite-TV trucks parked at the curb, their tall masts raised, their great dishes pointed heavenward, as if waiting for a word from God.

Although months had now passed since the stolen girl vanished, Mrs. Wilson combed through her memories every day, searching for the one small clue that might help to break the case and return the stolen girl to her family.

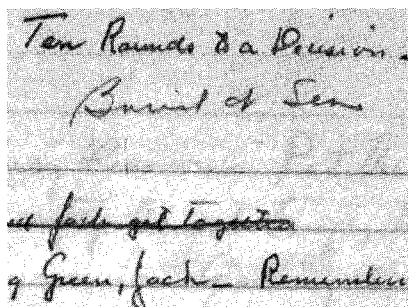
What *had* she seen that day? Surely she must have seen something. The stolen girl jogging past, her books clutched to her chest, chased by a gang of taunting older boys? A van prowling back and forth, its shadowy driver no doubt a religious zealot of some kind, searching for a girl to steal? But Mrs. Wilson remembered nothing of the sort. Increasingly, what she found swimming to the surface of her mind were memories that she had forced herself to set aside years before. She imagined this process to be not unlike that of a police boat trolling the Cumberland in search of one particular corpse and dragging up another instead.

When Mrs. Wilson was fifteen years old and lived in Jackson, Tennessee, she had loved a boy and become pregnant. Her parents had pulled her out of school, and when she began to show they sent her away to a home in Kentucky, where she lived with two Mennonite spinsters, as lumpen and sexless as sacks of horse feed, and a dozen other "girls in trouble." They were housed in a converted antebellum mansion on top of a hill outside Lexington, but there was nothing in any way grand about the place. Its parquet floors had been covered with gray institutional linoleum, which, although it was spotless, the spinsters forced them to scrub every day. The girls understood that the endless scrubbing was a punishment of sorts, part of the deal that their parents had struck with the operators of the home, something to make the girls "think twice" the next time they considered climbing into the back seat of a car with a boy. When Mrs. Wilson's baby came, she was not allowed to hold it. She glimpsed the child, a girl, only briefly, as they carried it away, still bloody, its mouth a tiny black O of perfect accusation.

Mrs. Wilson watched the news in Nashville and tried to recall the morning that the stolen girl had disappeared, but instead she remembered the violently blue eyes above the mask of the nurse who had leaned over her as she cried for them to bring back her baby. "Now, sweetheart," the woman said, "you know you can't take care of a baby."

A week after the baby was born, Mrs. Wilson returned home. Her family pretended that nothing had changed, but, of course, everything had. During her absence, she had become invisible to the

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boy she loved. She was too embarrassed to go back to school, and her parents didn't force her. Although she was the daughter of a doctor, and spent those long, empty days working on her tan at the country-club pool, she eventually married a poor boy, Virgil Wilson, who was handsome and kind to her and seemed not to notice that she was damaged goods. When Mrs. Wilson came to know Virgil better, she realized that he had considered her a canny choice, a good deal on his part—used, certainly, high-mileage, even, but over all a much better model than he would have been able to afford new.

They moved together to Nashville, where he worked as an electrician. They bought the house at the address that Jesse James had once called home, and they lived there more or less amicably for the forty-eight years it took Virgil Wilson to smoke himself to death. Their only child, a pleasant but wholly unremarkable boy, now lived in Phoenix, where he spoke Spanish like a Mexican and managed a small office for a large company that installed sprinkler systems in the yards of rich people. Mrs. Wilson's daughter-in-law was a vicious anorexic girl from California; her grandchildren couldn't understand her Tennessee accent over the phone. These were the facts of Mrs. Wilson's life, as she now added them up. If she had only been looking out the front window the morning the stolen girl had last walked by, if she had been able to run from the house and scream for the police and save that girl, how different it all might have seemed!

Mrs. Wilson still followed the case avidly on TV, though the reports were less and less frequent. She already knew, of course, that on the morning of the disappearance the stolen girl had been wearing blue shorts, a white T-shirt, and pink sneakers. One night at five, however, she learned that the stolen girl had also been wearing underwear decorated with a picture of Tigger, from "Winnie the Pooh," and one of the only two bras she owned. Her other bra remained neatly folded in her top dresser drawer. She had not packed a bag, nor had she removed from her nightstand the cache of sixty-eight dollars that she had earned babysitting.

The next night at ten, Mrs. Wilson watched a beautiful young woman with

perfectly unnatural red hair deliver a report that she, Mrs. Wilson, had watched her tape over and over earlier in the day. "For several months in the late eighteenthundreds," the woman said now, staring seriously out of Mrs. Wilson's television set into Mrs. Wilson's living room, "unbeknownst to his neighbors, the outlaw Jesse James lived with his wife and children in the house you see behind me. Now this quiet street bears an even darker secret: what happened to Angela B——?" At this point, the camera spun slowly toward Mrs. Wilson's house, where Mrs. Wilson was alarmed to see herself, peering like a ghost from behind her living-room curtains. "If the people on this street know what happened to the East Nashville seventh grader," the young woman said, off camera, "they're not talking." Mrs. Wilson was aghast. The report was, of course, just filler for a slow news night, but that little bitch had never even asked her if she knew anything! And the actual house that Jesse James lived in had burned down years before Mrs. Wilson was even born! She made a note to herself to call the station the next morning and complain.

Mrs. Wilson went to bed angry and woke in the middle of the night to find a door that she had never seen before ajar in the wall opposite her bed. She stuck her feet in her scuffs, put on the housecoat that was lying at the foot of the bed, and crossed the room. She pushed the door open with the palm of her hand and almost giggled as it creaked melodramatically. Below her, she saw an old wooden staircase disappearing into a dug-out basement. She didn't find it odd to discover a basement in a house that she had lived in for more than half a century, and for this reason alone she decided that she had to be dreaming. She stepped tentatively onto the top step, felt it bend slightly under her weight, and groped around for a light switch, which she did not find. The stairs, though, didn't seem entirely dark, so she took another step down, then a third and a fourth. Soon the staircase opened up entirely on her left (the stair didn't have a handrail), and, afraid to look down into the space below, she kept to the right-hand side of the steps, brushing the earthen wall gently with her finger tips as she descended. Studying the wall she made out spade marks left by the man who had dug the old basement. Go

knows when. The air grew cooler. It smelled moldy, unbreathed, perhaps unfit for breathing, and it began, as Mrs. Wilson travelled slowly downward, to take on a faintly rotten odor. She heard her grandmother's voice saying, "Copperheads, Julie, you can smell 'em. They smell like rotting Irish potatoes." And, for the first time, Mrs. Wilson understood that this basement was not a good place, that she would discover nothing here that would make her happy.

At the bottom of the steps, she found herself in a long, narrow room with a dirt floor. Dim daylight made its way in through a row of three filthy transom windows, set in the walls, just below the exposed floor joists of the house. At the center of the room crouched a massive black furnace, which Mrs. Wilson instantly recognized as the coal furnace from the home in Kentucky where she'd spent the final months of her pregnancy. Painted in white letters on the firebox door was the word "HYDE"—the name of the company that had manufactured the

furnace—and she remembered sitting on the floor next to it with a sad, thin girl from Alabama, sharing a single contraband cigarette. She remembered that the girl from Alabama had pointed at the name on the furnace and said, "That right there is what we're doing." The girl from Alabama lost her baby in the seventh month, Mrs. Wilson recalled, and she never heard from her again. Mrs. Wilson wondered how in the world the furnace from Kentucky had ended up underneath her house, and how much she would have to pay to have it cut up and hauled out. She cautiously approached the furnace, turned the handle, and tugged open the heavy door. As she leaned over to look inside, she heard a voice from behind the furnace say, "It don't work anymore. It ain't hooked up to nothing."

Mrs. Wilson walked around the furnace and saw a man sitting on a box in the corner in the thin light below one of the narrow windows. He had black hair and a full black beard. He seemed to have a dark bruise on his left cheek. His suit was

almost rotting off him, but tied carefully around his throat was an old-fashioned string tie. Mrs. Wilson understood, without quite knowing how, that the man had been sitting on that box, below that opaque window, for untold years. At his feet lay a moldering pile of something vaguely organic that Mrs. Wilson was able to recognize as a saddle only by its two rusted stirrups. As she stared at the man her mouth began to open in recognition. The man nodded. But when she pointed at him and said, "You're—" he raised his hand and cut her off.

"Don't say my name," he said.

"I won't."

"You have my doorknob."

Mrs. Wilson pointed above her head. "It's still in the house."

Jesse James nodded, as if this were a satisfactory answer.

"What do you know about me?" she asked.

He, too, pointed upward. "Everything," he said. "I can hear you."

She looked up at the exposed joists

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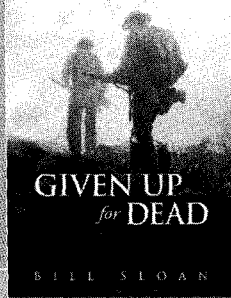
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We construct it from tin and ambergris and clay,
ochre, graph paper, a funnel
of ghosts, whirlpool
in a downspout full of midsummer rain.

It is, for all its freedom and obstinance,
an artifact of human agency
in its maverick intricacy,
its chaos reflected in earthly circumstance,

its appetites mirrored by a hungry world
like the lights of the casino
in the coyote's eye. Old
as the odor of almonds in the hills around Solano,

filigreed and chancelled with flavor of blood oranges,
fashioned from moonlight,
yarn, nacre, cordite,
shaped and assembled valve by valve, flange by flange,

and finished with the carnal fire of interstellar dust.
We build the human heart
and lock it in its chest
and hope that what we have made can save us.

—Campbell McGrath

and above the joists at the thin flooring.
A stray nail poked through the boards in
a spiky nest of splinters.

"See?" he said.

Mrs. Wilson nodded and stared at
the outlaw. "What are you waiting for?"
she asked.

Jesse James reared back on his box
and laughed, a scratchy, ill-used sound
that made her flinch. His teeth were yel-
low and dry-looking, and Mrs. Wilson
imagined his mouth filled with cobwebs.
"Why, kingdom come, Mrs. Wilson,"
he said. "Judgment Day. I'm waiting for
'em to roll back the stone."

Beside the outlaw, Mrs. Wilson no-
ticed for the first time, there was a per-
fectly round hole—the entrance to a tun-
nel—cut into the wall. She felt not exactly
a breeze but a slight stirring of air ema-
nating from the hole, and she inhaled
again the fetid copperhead smell she'd
noticed as she descended the stairs. It
was stronger now. She measured the hole
silently with her eyes and decided that
it'd be big enough to walk through if
she crouched.

Jesse James saw where she was look-
ing and shook his head. "I can't let you go
in there," he said.

"But I need to go."

"If you go in there, I can't let you
come back out."

"Who's in there?" she asked.

"The stolen girl," he said.

"Which one?" she heard herself ask.

Jesse James cocked his head and
looked at her quizzically, as if she should
already know the answer to the question
"Why, all of 'em," he said.

Mrs. Wilson awoke to find hersel
clutching her stomach and howl-
ing. She climbed out of bed and storme
through the house, doubled over, scream-
ing into a pain that seemed to have no
particular locus but flowed from every-
where at once.

"No!" she yelled in the kitchen.

"No!" she cried in the hallway.

In the living room, she collapsed onto
her good sofa and wailed, "No! Don't
take her. Bring her back!"

She drew her knees up to her ches

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and sobbed until the pain eased to the point where she noticed that the sobs themselves had become painful. She rolled onto her back and stared upward, trying to catch her breath. She was surprised to find that it was morning, that sunlight, indifferent and beautiful, was filling the room, as if all were right in the world. Mrs. Wilson climbed to her feet and staggered to the front door. She took the key from the nail, unlocked the deadbolt, and pulled the door open. She gasped when she saw two little girls, no more than seven or eight years old, heading along the sidewalk toward the bus stop, their arms linked, their heads close together, giggling and whispering conspiratorially. School had started again. Mrs. Wilson felt a cold shot of adrenaline flutter into her heart. Nobody was watching the girls. Where were their parents? Where were the police? How could everyone have forgotten the stolen girl so soon? Only a few months had passed, after all, since the stolen girl had walked this street for the last time.

Fifteen or twenty yards behind the girls, a teen-age boy—overweight, his black, baggy jeans drooping down over the tops of his shoes, some sort of sports jersey hanging almost to his knees—clumped along, looking at the ground, nodding his head to whatever music he was listening to through the headphones he had clamped over his ears. Mrs. Wilson crossed her porch. She stepped down onto the top step and pointed an accusing finger at the boy. "I'm watching you," she called out. "I know who you are. I know where you live. I'll recognize you."

The boy nodded along, oblivious. But out of the corner of her eye Mrs. Wilson saw one of the girls look back. The girl whispered something to her friend, who also glanced over her shoulder at Mrs. Wilson. Then the second girl said something to the first and together they began to run, their book bags bouncing against their backs in a way that looked painful. Mrs. Wilson clutched the collar of her housecoat and ran a hand through her hair. "No," she whispered. "Oh, no." She took a few hesitant steps down the sidewalk, waving at the girls, as if waving could pull them back, could make them unafraid. "Come back!" she said. "It's not me! I swear. You don't have to be afraid of me!" ♦

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THE CRITICS



BOOKS

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

David Foster Wallace gives an account of the uncountable.

BY JIM HOLT

Few ideas have had a racier history than the idea of infinity. It arose amid ancient paradoxes, proceeded to baffle philosophers for a couple of millennia, and then, by a daring feat of intellect, was finally made to yield its secrets in the late nineteenth century—though not without leaving a new batch of paradoxes. You don't need any specialized knowledge to follow the plot: the main discoveries, despite the ingenuity behind them, can be conveyed with a few strokes of a pen on a cocktail napkin. All of this makes infinity irresistible meat for the popularizer, and quite a few books in that vein have appeared over the years. Now, in "Everything and More: A Compact History of ∞ " (Norton; \$23.95), the celebrated author David Foster Wallace has set out to initiate readers into its mysteries.

It might seem odd that finite beings like us could come to know anything about infinity, given that we have no direct experience of it. Descartes thought that the idea of infinity was innate, but the behavior of children suggests otherwise; in one study, children in their early school years "reported 'counting and counting' in an attempt to find the last number, concluding there was none after much effort." As it happens, the man who did the most to capture infinity in a theory claimed that his insights were vouchsafed to him by God and ended his life in a mental asylum.

Broadly speaking, there are two ver-

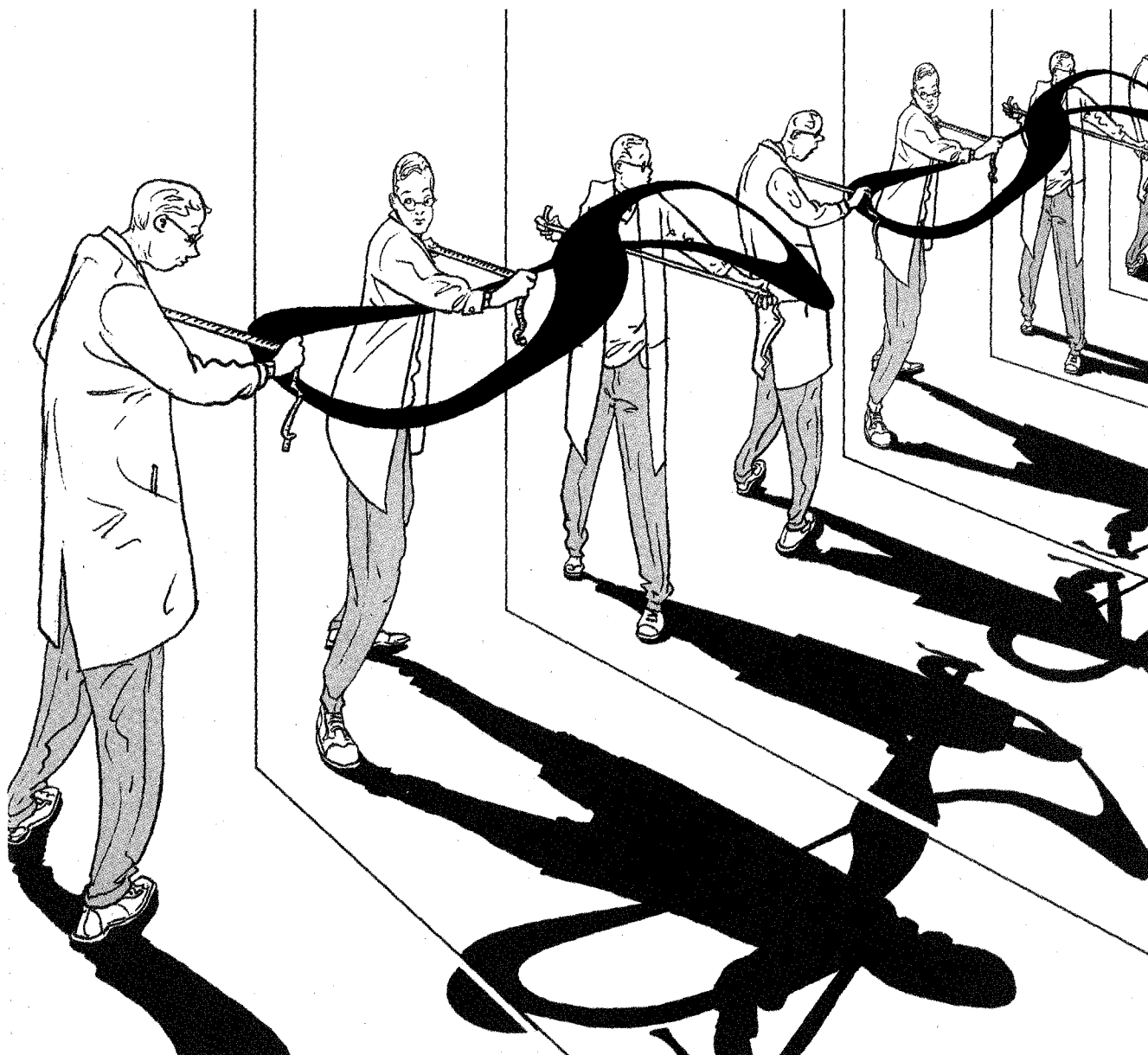
sions of infinity. The woollier, more mystical one, which might be called metaphysical infinity, is associated with ideas like perfection, the absolute, and God. The more hardheaded version, mathematical infinity, is the one that Wallace's book is concerned with. It derives from the idea of endlessness: numbers that can be generated inexhaustibly, time that goes on forever, space that can be subdivided without limit. While metaphysical infinity tends to evoke awe in those who contemplate it, mathematical infinity has, for most of Western intellectual history, been an object of grave suspicion, even scorn. It first cropped up in the fifth century B.C., in the paradoxes of Zeno of Elea. If space is infinitely divisible, Zeno argued, then swift Achilles could never overtake the tortoise: each time he caught up to where the tortoise was, it would have advanced a little farther, ad infinitum. So traumatizing were such paradoxes that Aristotle was moved to ban the idea of a "completed" infinity from Greek thought, setting the orthodoxy for the next two thousand years.

The eventual rehabilitation of the infinite had its origins in another paradox, this one framed by Galileo in 1638. Consider, Galileo said, all the whole numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on. Now consider just those numbers which are *squares*: 1, 4, 9, 16, and so on. Surely there are more numbers than squares, since the squares make up just a part of the numbers, and a small part at that. Yet, Galileo ob-

served, there is a way of pairing off squares with whole numbers: 1 to 1, 2 to 4, 3 to 9, 4 to 16, and so on. When two finite sets can be made to correspond in this way, so that each item from the first set gets matched with precisely one item from the second set, and vice versa, you know that they are of equal size without having to go through the tedious business of counting. (In a non-polygamous society, for example, you don't need to consult the census to know that the number of husbands is the same as the number of wives.) Extending the principle to infinite collections, Galileo felt himself drawn toward the conclusion that there are as many square numbers as there are numbers, period. The part, in other words, was equal to the whole—a result that struck him as absurd.

Two and a half centuries later, Georg Cantor made Galileo's paradox a basis for a mathematical theory of infinity. Cantor, who lived from 1845 to 1918, was a Russian-born German mathematician with an artistic streak and a keen interest in theology. He saw that the collapse of the familiar logic of part and whole yielded a new definition of infinity, one that did not rely on the vague notion of endlessness. An infinite set, as Cantor characterized it, is one that is the same size as some of its parts—a set, then, that can lose some of its members without being diminished. Now Cantor was in a position to ask a novel question: Are all infinities the same, or are some more infinite than others?

Looking for an infinity bigger than that of the whole numbers, he started by considering the set of fractions. It seemed a good bet, since fractions are densely ordered on the number line: between ever two whole numbers there are infinitely many fractions. (Between 0 and 1, for example, lie $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, and so on.) Yet Cantor, to his surprise, was able to find an easy way of matching up the whole numbers and the fractions one to one. Despite initial appearances, these two infinities turned out to be the same. Perhaps, he thought, all infinite sets, by dint of being inexhaustible, were of the same magnitude. But then he looked at the "real" numbers—those marking off the points on a continuous line. Could the too, be paired up, one to one, with the whole numbers? By a surpassingly clever bit of reasoning, called the "diagonal



Georg Cantor's demonstration that some infinities were larger than others was dismissed by critics as "mathematical insanity."

proof," Cantor showed that the answer was no. In other words, there were at least two distinct infinities, that of the whole numbers and that of the continuum, and the second was greater than the first.

But was that the end of it? In searching for a still larger species of infinity, Cantor looked to higher dimensions. Surely, he thought, there must be more points in a two-dimensional plane than in a one-dimensional line. For a couple of years, he struggled to prove that the points in a plane could not be paired off one to one with the points in a line, only to find, in 1878, that such a correspondence was indeed possible. A simple trick showed that there were exactly as many points on a one-inch line as there were in all of space. "I see it, but I do not

believe it!" Cantor wrote to a colleague.

With the discovery that neither size nor dimension was the way to higher infinities, the quest seemed to stall. But after more than a decade of intense work (interrupted by a stay in a sanatorium after a nervous breakdown), Cantor arrived at a powerful new principle that enabled him to resume the ascent: there are always more *sets* of things than things. This is obvious enough in a finite world. If you have, say, three objects, you can form eight different sets out of them (including, of course, the empty set). Cantor's genius lay in extending the same principle into the realm of the infinite.

To make matters a little less abstract, you might pretend that we live in a world with an infinite number of people.

Now consider all the possible *clubs* (sets of people) that might exist in this world. The least exclusive of these clubs—the universal club—will be the one of which absolutely everyone is a member. The most exclusive—the null club—will be the one that has no members at all. In between these two extremes will lie an infinity of other clubs, some with lots of members, some with few. How big is this infinity? Is there any way of matching up clubs and people one to one, thereby showing that the two infinite collections are the same size? Suppose that every person can be paired off with precisely one club, and vice versa. Some of the people will happen to be members of the club with which they are paired (for example, the person who gets paired

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with the universal club). Others will happen *not* to be members of their associated club (for example, the person who gets paired with the null club). Those people make up a group you might call the Groucho Club. The Groucho Club is a sort of *salon des refusés*: it consists of all the people who are paired with clubs that won't have them as members.

Now, here is where things get interesting. Since the pairing of people with clubs is assumed to be complete, there must be some fellow who is paired up with the Groucho Club. Is that fellow a member of the Groucho Club or not? Well, suppose he is. That means that he must be excluded from the club he is paired with. So he is not a member of the Groucho Club. But if he is not a member of the Groucho Club, then, since the club he is paired with won't have him, he is a member of the Groucho Club. No matter which way we turn, we get a contradiction. How did we get to this impasse? By supposing that people could be paired off, one to one, with clubs. So that supposition has to be false. Which is to say, the infinity of sets of things is greater than the infinity of things.

The beauty of this principle, which has come to be known as Cantor's theorem, is that it can be applied over and over again. Given any infinite set, you can always come up with a larger infinity by considering its "power set"—the set of all its subsets. Atop a simple *reductio ad absurdum*, Cantor built a never-ending tower of infinities. It seemed a dream vision, like Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." Yet mathematicians found in this new theory the resources needed to put their subject on a sure footing. "No one shall expel us from the paradise which Cantor has created for us," one of them declared. Others, however, dismissed Cantor's infinity of infinities as a "fog on a fog" and "mathematical insanity." Cantor felt persecuted by these critics, which worsened his nervous condition (he seems to have suffered from a bipolar disorder). Between frequent breakdowns and hospitalizations, he pondered the theological implications of the infinite and, with equal ardor, pursued the theory that Bacon wrote the works of Shakespeare.

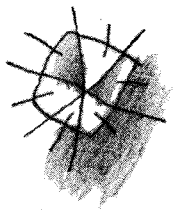
Cantor's theory constitutes "direct evidence that actually-infinite sets can be understood and manipulated, truly *handled* by the human intellect," Wallace

writes. What makes this achievement so heroic, he observes, is the awful abstractness of infinity: "It's sort of the ultimate in drawing away from actual experience," a negation of "the single most ubiquitous and oppressive feature of the concrete world—namely, that everything ends, is limited, passes away." Wallace is alive to the "dreads and dangers" of abstract thinking. For two millennia, the idea of infinity was thought to pose hazards to one's sanity. It was Cantor, for all his madness, who managed to tame infinity, and showed that it could be reasoned about without derangement.

Writing accessibly about abstract mathematical ideas poses hazards of its own. One pitfall of such attempts is purple prose. A widely read book about the calculus tells us that "the Cartesian plane is suffused with a strange and somber silence"; a book about zero says that this number is "a shadow in the slanting light of fear." Another pitfall is mysticism. In "The Mystery of the Aleph," a book about infinity, Amir D. Aczel tries to make Georg Cantor into a Kabbalist who entered "God's secret garden" and lost his sanity in punishment. Rudy Rucker's "Infinity and the Mind," a terrific study with real mathematical depth, takes an unwelcome excursion into Zen Buddhism. On the other hand a little classic called "Playing with Infinity," by Rózsa Péter, a Hungarian logician who died in 1977, achieves both charm and clarity without a bit of extraneous guff. But all these popularizers, whatever their lapses, conscientiously did the brutal work that is required to make abstract ideas clear, even beautiful to the beginner. By simplifying, leaving things out, they produced a first approximation to real understanding.

Wallace's book, by contrast, can't quite be described as popularization. Wallace assures us that it is "a piece of pop technical writing," and that his own mathematical background doesn't go much beyond high school. And yet he has refused to make the usual compromises. "Everything and More" is sometimes as dense as a math textbook, though rather more chaotic. I have never come across a popular book about infinity that packs so much technical detail—especially one that purports to be "compact." (What Wallace calls "booklet" actually runs to more than

hundred pages.) The motive behind this is admirable: Wallace is determined to improve on "certain recent pop math that give such shallow and reductionist accounts of Cantor's proofs . . . that the math is distorted and its beauty obscured." But when a writer's grasp of his subject is less than sure, he risks sacrilege to spectacle, flashing equated technical terms at his audience like a magician's deck of cards. Wallace invites us simply to "play" in the "symbolology." He tells us that some of the "inaccessible ordinals," like "aleph-one recursion"—are "fun to play with even if one has no clear idea of what they're supposed to denote." Wallace's affection for the mathematical text-sual display may also explain his "tendency" for initials and abbreviations. "The word 'respect to' becomes 'w/r/t,' G becomes 'G.G.," and the "Divine Proportion of Pythagoras" is "D.B.P."), giving measures that are hard to follow with his energetic volubility. Wallace's enthusiasm for the theory of infinity is evident on every page at least in his conviction that "the most important mathematics of the nineteenth century," a few mathematicians or intellectual historians would agree with). It is sometimes over his head it is that he has chosen to wade through the deepest waters. The question is whether he will bring his readers along. In the absence of assistance, Wallace offers us "encyclopedia glossaries," elaborate directions (D.Q.E.I. RETURN TO ¶ 2 OF (B), ESS"), and frequent warnings of "paradoxes" ("Parts of E.G.II are as brutal . . . regrets are hereby acknowledged"), yet the result is to complicate matters further. In explaining how Cantor came to consider infinite sets, he brings up Fourier integrals, but is unable for an advanced course in calculus, reassuring readers that all that is to know about them is that "certain kinds of 'closed-form' solutions to partial differential equations." Finally, he provides, at the end of the book, a list of "Quoted and/or Paraphrased Material"; but too much of the apparatus seems to have arrived at the end of the book. You can't stuff something like a geometry into a footnote, and Wallace's are a master of the form.



Then for whom is the book intended? If laymen will be dazzled by its resolute obscurity, expert readers, who tend to be a fussy lot, may take a dim view of the autodidact's small missteps. Wallace says that a certain curve is "discontinuous" at a point where in fact it is not even defined. He muddles the Law of the Excluded Middle (every proposition is either true or false) by adding an extra clause (every proposition is either true or, if not true, false) that serves no logical purpose. He gives an erroneous account of the work of Kurt Gödel, claiming that the logician showed that "a formal system can't be both Complete and Consistent." (That's the case when the formal system contains arithmetic, but elementary geometry is a formal system that has been proved both complete and consistent.) Nor will philosophers have confidence in an account venturing that one of Cantor's contemporaries is a "Platonist" (Platonism here being the view that mathematical entities, such as numbers, are timelessly real, not products of our thought), only to quote him as saying that "numbers are free creations of the human mind"—which is precisely the opposite of Platonism.

A book that prizes difficulty but not rigor is probably not meant for those in search of mathematical illumination; what it offers, in the end, is a purely literary experience. Regarding the nature of that experience, you may find a clue in Ludwig Wittgenstein's response to Cantor's great contribution. The thrill we get from discovering that some infinities are bigger than others, Wittgenstein thought, is just a "schoolboy pleasure." There is nothing awesome about the theory; it does not describe a world of timeless, transcendent, scarcely conceivable entities—it is really no more than a collection of (finite) tricks of reasoning. One might imagine, Wittgenstein said, that the theory of infinite sets was "created by a satirist as a kind of parody of mathematics." Wallace, whose satiric gifts have long been appreciated, may have achieved something considerable after all—a sly send-up of pop technical writing. "A parody of mathematics": As a description of Cantor's work on infinity, it is surely unjust. As a description of Wallace's, it may be taken as a tribute. ♦

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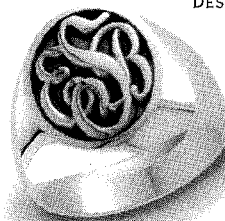
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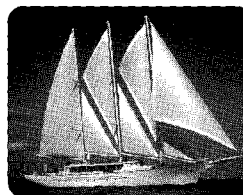
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BOOKS

AN OBSTINATE SURVIVOR

Robert Hughes takes on the life of Goya.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

Spain may have lost her American Empire, but dead Spanish painters lately rule the hemisphere of art: Picasso going *mano a mano* with Matisse at MOMA Queens; Velázquez and Zurbarán up at the Met this spring, soberly showing Manet the way to modernity; this fall at the Met, the Heaven-oriented El Greco megashow; and now a thick, lovingly produced book, "Goya," by Robert Hughes (Knopf; \$40). Hughes, a native Australian who moved to the United States in 1970 and was, until 2001, the chief art critic for *Time*, has been a robust, even rambunctious writer, unabashedly opinionated and flamboyantly metaphorical and aphoristic: I have seen his prose characterized as of the Muscle Beach school, which, transposed to the higher cultural tone of Sydney's Bondi Beach, seems fair enough. He has done the workouts to get himself into shape, and, if he turned a few handstands and kicked sand at a few ninety-pound weaklings, his pleasure in his own strength and suppleness of mind and pen was infectious.

"Goya" begins, however, with an Acknowledgments startlingly different from the customary bows to sources and editorial helpmeets. First off, Hughes thanks his wife for giving him the strength to do the book at all, "after a near-fatal car crash on a desert highway in Western Australia in 1999." The crash received ample publicity at the time and again when Hughes appeared in court in Western Australia, charged with "dangerous driving causing grievous bodily harm." The charge was dismissed, then reinstated on appeal; Hughes entered a guilty plea and paid a twenty-five-hundred-dollar fine. The head-on collision left many of his bones pulverized; he underwent a dozen operations and a total of six months of hospitalization. "Three and a half years after the accident," the Acknowledgments tell us, "I am almost back on my feet," and he offers himself this consolation:

Perhaps, if life is fully experienced no waste. It was through the accident I came to know extreme pain, fear, despair; and it may be that the writer does not know fear, despair, and pain can know Goya.

So it is a wounded critic who po artist wounded, in 1792, by a that left him stone-deaf and, in Napoleon's conquest of Spain. has been interested in Goya, he since his adolescence, when he p a copy of the print "El Sueño: Razón Produce Monstruos" ("The of Reason Brings Forth Monsters" studied other reproductions i and "realized to [his] astonishment extremity of the tragic sense could put onto little sheets of paper

Among pre-modern artists reputations flourish in the present. Goya is unusual in that his contenters more than his painterly talent. His cycle of etchings "Los Desastres de la Guerra" is still viewed as an shocking depiction of war's horrors. etchings called "Caprichos" are "black" paintings done on the his farmhouse outside Madrid. miration as uncanny incursions: their witches and murky contents the subconscious, anticipating ism. Goya emits, nearly two after his death, a whiff of a potent mystery. Yet for all of that he was a workmanlike practitioner forming what commissions are able—portraits, religious subjects, nign and colorful panoramas transformed into tapestries.

The son of a gilder in the nese capital of Zaragoza, Francisco Goya attended the Escuelas Antón, a church school that education to children of the was not notably poor; his a craftsman employed on the tion of Zaragoza's grand residence to the Virgin, and his mother

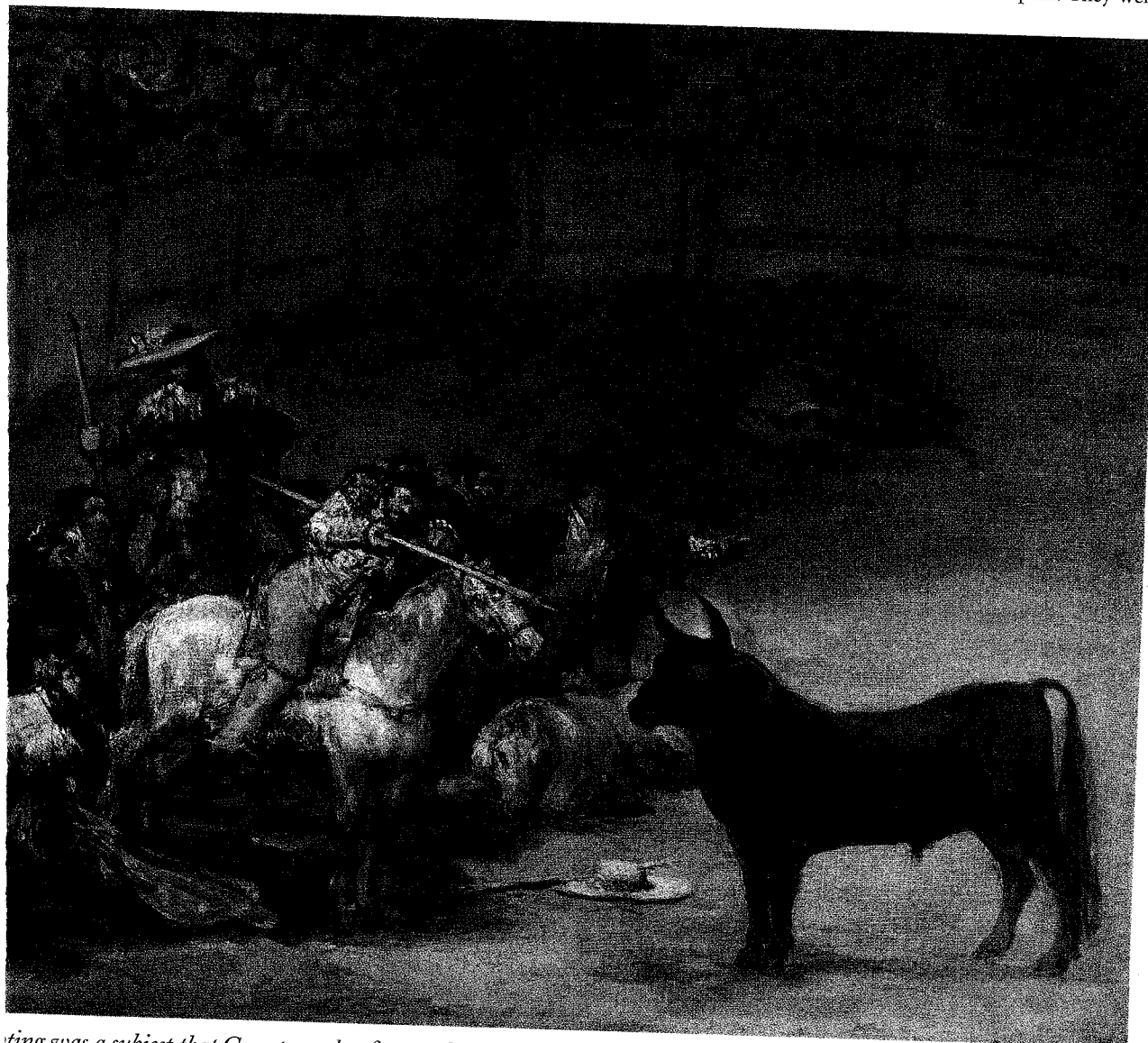
the *hidalguía*, the lowest order of Spain's proliferating aristocracy, *hidalgo* being a contraction of the noncommittal phrase *hijo de algo*—"son of somebody." At the age of thirteen, the boy was apprenticed to a painter, José Luzán, whose teachers were gilders and knew Goya's father. Goya recalled simply that, in four years, Luzán taught him the rudiments of design and made him copy the best things he possessed. Hughes writes, "He seems to have taken, as one essayist rather harshly put it, no more interest than a carpenter in philosophical or theoretical matters, and his views on painting . . . were very down-to-earth: Goya was no theoretician." His early works were common life as sunny, and his passions were those of an average male—hunting and the bullfight. It is we are left to feel, a blunt, unapologetic sense of truth that led Goya to

shed conventional decorum and become the most expressionistic, daring, abstractifying visual artist prior to Impressionism, with the exception of the Englishman J. M. W. Turner.

Of Goya's life, there is not much to say aside from the work. His wife, Josefa, was the sister of a young Zaragoza artist, Francisco Bayeu, originally thought to be far more promising than Goya, who twice flunked an attempt to win a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. The struggling painter married Josefa in 1773, when he was twenty-seven. Out of as many as twenty pregnancies, she bore him seven children whose baptisms are recorded but of whom only one, Francisco Javier, survived. She herself died in 1812, making room for a housekeeper, Leocadia Zorrilla de Weiss, who brought her two children into the aging artist's household.

Leocadia has come down to posterity as handsome and shrewish—a good combination for a deaf painter. She followed Goya in his elderly relocation to Bordeaux, in 1824, but received nothing in his will. The bulk of his estate went to Javier, his only legitimate descendant. Goya was fond of Javier, but Hughes pronounces him "a flop of a son, lazy and just short of a wastrel. He made no career for himself [and] died at the age of sixty-nine, having done very little with his life." So much for family attachments. Goya admired the glamorous Duchess of Alba, as did many others. Hughes breathes hot, then cold, on the relationship:

That he desired her, with the passionate and rather hopeless possessiveness men in their fifties and sixties can feel for much younger women, there can be little doubt. . . . She, in turn, was flattered by the attentions of the most fashionable artist in Spain. They were



ing was a subject that Goya turned to frequently; "Suerte de Varas" ("Bullfight"), of 1824, is one of his last paintings.

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friends. But that, in broad outline, is all we know about Goya's relationship to the duchess of Alba.

She did *not* pose, as has been conjectured, for "The Naked Maja" (c. 1797-1800) and her discreet twin, "The Clothed Maja" (c. 1805). That distinction belongs, it would seem, to one of the young mistresses of Manuel de Godoy, Spain's Prime Minister under Carlos IV, before Napoleon's intervention. Godoy's notorious womanizing extended to Queen Louisa herself; and "most probably" "The Naked Maja," showing (according to Hughes) "what are certainly the first curls of female pubic hair in Western art," represented "the great love of Godoy's life, a spectacularly pretty and sexy Málaga girl named Pepita Tudo." After thirty years, the exiled Godoy's neglected wife died back in Madrid, and he made Pepita an honest woman by marrying her.

Hughes at times seems dutifully methodical as he moves through the art, but he is lively on the wan comedy of Spanish history during Goya's life span. A lukewarmly reform-minded monarch, Carlos III, yielded to a weak-minded son, Carlos IV, who hunted his days away while revolution beheaded his cousin in Paris, and who allowed himself, with his court, to be kidnapped by Napoleon; after six years, during which Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, officially ruled Spain as José I, the Bourbon monarchy was restored by Carlos IV's ultra-conservative son, Fernando VII. Goya had been employed by Carlos *père* and was greatly appreciated by Carlos *filis*, who made him *primer pintor del rey*—"first painter to the King." Though he accepted no salary from José I, *el rey intruso*, he did accept commissions; he included the King's profile in his "Allegory of Madrid" and executed a few portraits of the King's mistress, the King's secretary of state, and the King's aide-de-camp and the aide-de-camp's little son. Goya also served on a commission to select fifty Spanish paintings as a gift to Napoleon, and accepted, in 1811, a royal decoration popularly known as *la berenjena*, "the eggplant." He was thus exposed, after 1814, to charges of collaboration, which were eventually dismissed. But Fernando's government, welcomed back with such enthusiastic verses as "*Vivan las cadenzas, Viva la opresión*"

("Long live our chains, Long live oppression"), was ruthless in hunting down French sympathizers (*afrancesados*), vended to belong to Spain's minority Enlightenment intellectuals (*ilustrados*). Goya, investigated not only by the court but by the Inquisition, eventually sought exile. Occupiers, as we know not come without what they regard as benefits; José I brought with him a liberal constitution and incipient relief from the grip of the Church and the aristocracy upon the Spanish land. But the people, like the Irish and others, rallied to their native institutions, however nighted; they extolled the absentee monarch as *el deseado* ("the desired one") while the emphatic Robert Hughes told him a "detestable archreactionary," "tyrannous weasel," and "the royal tyrant."

The dreadful accident in World War I has not extinguished Hughes' old habits of incidental invective capsule tirade. In a passing put-down, "Death in the Afternoon" as "unable today," he describes Hemingway "sounding like such a lady" because "what his style owed to an American lesbian, Gertrude Stein"; in connection with Queen Louisa's reported sexual misbehavior, Hughes cites "that satirical kitsch sentiment Princess Di" and, without particulars, Prince Philip; of Warhol, that saint of American modernism, we are told that, "given the climate [he] would probably have served the Nazis with enthusiasm"; Velázquez sideswiped as "one of the most despicable snobs that ever touched a brush"; a scornful epithet "chinless" attaches to villains in a mere seven pages—"Gissimo Franco, that stumpy tyrant narcissism knew no bounds" is a by the photogenically strong-climatic author, to have had a "chinless portrait" and we are invited to remember, at the cost of war crimes, "the chinless policeman blowing out the brains of a plaid suspect at point-blank range with a kicking .38 on a Saigon street." Hughes' learned prose is peppered with expressions from below the salt: derisively John Ruskin was "cuckoo"; "wing loonies" used to oppose flu drinking water; Goya painted "that went bump in the night"; and is certainly right on the beam about the essential *marcialidad* and mode of Goya's challenging cutie."

a compulsive social critic and free-
 ing historian, Hughes performs in
 "va" above all as an art critic, and he
 is considerably to dispel the reader's
 sion that Goya doesn't give the eye
 enough to do. Hughes more than
 notes that, however violent or fan-
 the subject of a print, an underly-
 geometrical severity" makes it "as
 assical as a David":

do not habitually think of Goya as
 classical artist: his work is too distur-
 . But in truth, the signs of what he
 with men like Piranesi, Jacques-Louis
 the architect John Soane, and even
 ngular didactic fantasist Etienne-Louis
 e are written all over the *Caprichos*.
 ost obvious of these are the composi-
 structures he uses, which tend to be
 plicit and readily reduced to geomet-
 rmulas. . . . He loves the diagonal and
 ntly uses it as the basis of his groups
 res. . . . Goya enjoyed the contrast be-
 he abstract severity of some composi-
 and their intense human emotions.

artistic education, devoted to
 g prints, fitted him for the balanc-
 -arresting unbalancing) of black-
 white etchings, to which he skill-
 lded the novel tool of aquatint, a
 l of inducing an even halftone on
 te with a dusting of fine particles
 1. As a handler of pigment, Goya
 the viewer more with his increas-
 edom of brushwork than with
 oristic brilliance; his palette is cus-
 y brownish and subdued, clayey
 ched, showing what Hughes calls
 lored tact." However, the canvas
 h this is said, the large "Family of
 V," often taken as Goya's riposte
 quez's great "Las Meninas," stirs
 his fervent praise: "The surface is
 his most energetic, a free, spot-
 asted crust of pigment that keeps
 ; into light, full of vitality with
 dull touch." Of Goya's possi-
 ations—the milky vapidness of
 orical and religious figures, a
 yed cartoonishness that thins
 an presence of some portraits,
 urity with anatomy very notice-
 "The Naked Maja"—Hughes
 . For him, Goya has few faults
 ot the faults of his virtues: the
 the fury, the "obstinately realis-
 to express the unspeakable in
 g, enigmatic images ultimate
 onesty.

fascination with life's extremes
 it and emergency and broken-

down order suits our modern sense that
 these extremes, and not the mild quotid-
 ian middle ground of human experi-
 ence, hold the real truth. Goya's work,
 long before the "Desastres de la Guerra"
 prints and the Walpurgisnacht of the
 black paintings, sought out this truth
 in representations of cannibals, insane-
 asylum inmates, witches, bullring gor-
 ings, crimes of passion, and bandits—
 not the amusing bandits of folk ballad
 but merciless killers inhabiting Spain's
 in-between spaces, visiting theft, rape,
 and murder on those who have ventured,
 in carriages, from their havens of safety.
 The 1793 oil "Attack on a Coach" pre-
 figures the "Asalto de Bandidos" series, of
 1808-12, which takes rape from the play-
 ful realm of classical mythology to the
 brutal sensationalism of contemporary
 atrocity: the tall woman, seen by fire-
 light, being stripped of her clothes pre-
 paratory to being raped and stabbed to
 death is a more disturbing, moving nude
 than "The Naked Maja." Yet even she, lit-
 tle minx that she is, has a touch of nerv-
 ous vulnerability in her frontal pose; she
 is a realistic remove from Titian's imper-
 turbable Venus or Velázquez's magnifi-
 cent Rokeby Venus, who turns her back
 on us while gazing into a mirror. A naked
 woman is no goddess; she can be hurt.

To bring human pain into depiction
 was a mighty deed, for which Goya, who
 painted for four kings, received small re-
 ward in his lifetime. Instead, he receives
 recognition from the bloodied genera-
 tions since, and this thorough, profusely
 argued and illustrated homage from
 Robert Hughes. The author's own or-
 deal gives force to his haunting phrasing
 of Goya's "fear of being no longer able to
 impose himself upon the world, brought
 to the surface in an acute form in his
 deafness." The desire to impose oneself
 upon the world is a rarely expressed mo-
 tive for art, yet it can be felt in Goya, as
 he relentlessly bared the nightmare
 below the world's surface, and was felt by
 the artist himself. Approaching eighty,
 still working, he declared in a letter to a
 friend, "I've no more sight, no hand, nor
 pen, nor inkwell, I lack everything—all
 I've got left is will." ♦

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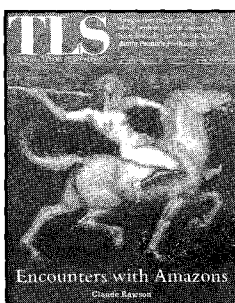


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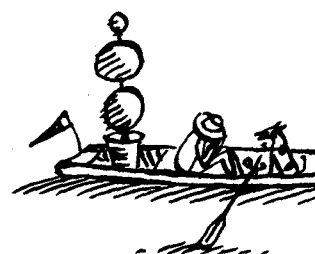
One Last Look, by *Susanna Moore* (Knopf; \$23). There is a certain kind of historical fiction which excels at evoking time and place—the dresses and the narrative voice just so, the moans of the mango bird in the tree exquisitely described—but, like this novel, Moore's fifth, fails to build into something larger. Henry Oliphant, the new British Governor-General of India, comes to Calcutta with his two sisters in 1836. They discover the country's emeralds, brocades, and phalanxes of servants, but are sheltered, at least for a time, from its grotesque poverty, and from political dynamics that will cause Henry's downfall. The narrative takes the form of a journal kept by the elder sister, and Moore has relied on contemporaneous accounts by British women in India both for factual details and for her prose style. The over-all effect, however accomplished, is so studied that it brings to mind the virtuoso performances that the narrator herself records: the snake charmer, or the monkey who climbs tall trees to pick tea leaves.

The Unprofessionals, by *Julie Hecht* (Random House; \$23.95). Hecht's first novel revisits the batty, obsessive narrator of her short-story collection "Do the Windows Open?" a photographer who continuously criticizes everyone who doesn't share her preoccupation with organic vegetables, vitamins, and plain white cotton shirts. Now the narrator is more self-aware, and she occasionally even shows sympathy for others. The story itself charts the course of her friendship, conducted in endless late-night phone calls, with a kindred spirit of sorts, a young man whom she has known since he was a child, and whose fastidious revulsion with the world around him equals her own. His witty tirades—he loathes the tastes of his own generation and longs for the seemlier style of the nineteen-fifties—mask a dark self-destructiveness that makes the narrator's eccentricities look trivial.

Judgment Ridge, by *Mitchell Zuckoff and Dick Lehr* (HarperCollins; \$25.95). In January, 2001, Half and Susanne Zantop, popular professors at Dartmouth Col-

lege, were murdered in their home in New Hampshire. Clever detective-linked knife sheaths found at the scene a pair of teen-agers, Robert Tulloch and Jim Parker, who lived in an isolated mountain town thirty miles away. Confessed by police, the boys fled; eventually they were tracked down in Indiana. Parker, the sidekick, struck a plea bargain that may free him in sixteen years, but Tulloch pleaded guilty and received a sentence of life without parole. Zuckoff and Lehr, who covered the case for the Boston Globe, examine in fascinating detail the narrowness of the boys' grudges—the high-school controversies about the student council and the debate team, how, in Tulloch's twisted mind, the act of random killing became an obsession.

Where'd You Get Those?, by *Leo Garcia* (Testify; \$35). In the nineteen-seventies, colorful sneakers made headlines as Adidas, Puma, and Nike began to replace traditional Converse on the basketball courts and sidewalks, and Garcia was born. In New York City, a fierce coalition of basketball players, writers, break-dancers, and rappers voted themselves to the stylistic liberties of these shoes, making certain models, coloring and cutting them and devising elaborate patterns. Garcia's book is an anthropological trove, blending autobiographical history, vintage ads, grainy urban glamour, and (occasionally) loving description of inner-city sneakers. Though most of the text concerns subjective questions of taste and sense, an occasional note of function intrudes: praising an Adidas high-top graffiti writer says, "If I was born on elevated trains I wanted ankle cutouts and Top Tens were ridiculous."

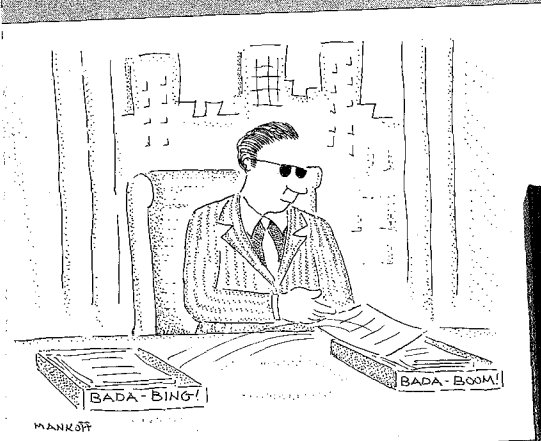


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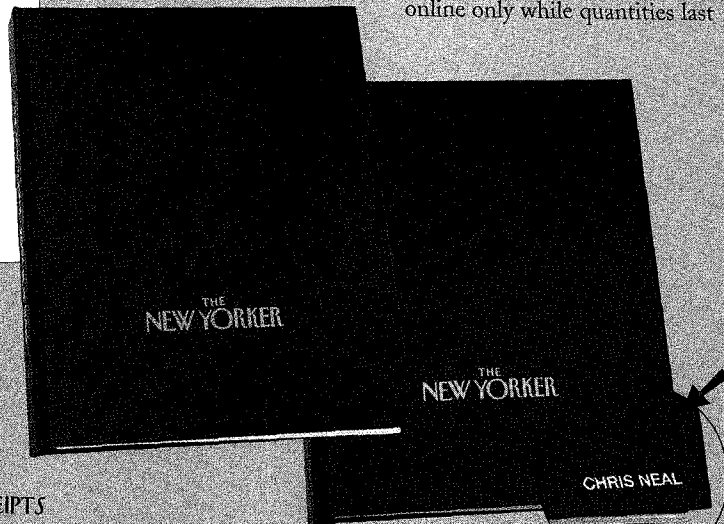
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THE TIES THAT BIND

A marriage dissolves in "The Retreat from Moscow."

BY JOHN LAHR

Once upon a time, when my only son was eleven, I leaned over his bed and heard myself say, "Your mother and I are separating." He was silent for a while; then he said, "I don't want your unhappiness." As I left the room, I naively thought, How did he know we were unhappy? This memory, in all its bright grief, came rushing back to me in the middle of "The Retreat from Moscow" (at the Booth), William Nicholson's subtle and powerful evocation of the half-life of a dying marriage.

Resignation—a sort of emotional fog—has settled over the thirty-three-year marriage of an English couple, Edward (John Lithgow), a high-school history teacher, and Alice (Eileen Atkins), an editor; their reserved thirty-two-year-old son, Jamie (Ben Chaplin), is strategically positioned between them—at once a beacon and a buffer. The curtain comes up on Edward reading aloud from a text about Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign; this historical event, it soon becomes

clear, is a metaphor for Edward's own emotional exhaustion, his longing for escape, and the deep regret he feels over the tactical blunders he has made in life. As Lithgow superbly plays him—a big, passive man with a small, dithering voice—Edward refuses to engage; he hides behind his books, his silences, and his vagueness. He is a present absence, a sort of ghost of himself. "It's like somehow you've sneaked away while I wasn't looking," Alice, who animates the family life and always tries to provoke conversation, says. "It's as if you've taken the

easy way out." She adds, "I want a real marriage." Edward's refusal to fight and to assert his needs signals his nihilism; he doesn't care enough to argue. He will do anything to have an easy life, even disappear.

Alice, on the other hand, does all she can to stay in view. "When a woman reaches middle age she becomes invis-



Ben Chaplin, Eileen Atkins, and John Lithgow somehow form a family.

ble," she says. "I don't quite know how to cope with it, except by getting angry, which I do more or less all the time these days." People, especially her husband, don't seem to take her in. Her perpetual note of sprightly grievance—the drizzle of discontent that is the hysteric's trademark—is coupled with another trope of hysterical behavior: she repeatedly tries to force her inner life into the consciousness of others. Cunningly shaded by Eileen Atkins's keen intelligence and sense of humor, Alice is a scintillating characterization, an appealingly batty

woman who is also a kind of emotional terrorist. This element of her person is foreshadowed in an entertaining scene she spins for Jamie, at the beginning of the play, about how a faulty printer prevented her from finishing the play anthology she's working on. As a computer salesman, she says, told her that the problem was not with the printer but with her. "I was so angry I wanted to hit him," she tells Jamie. She said to him, 'You're the kind of man who doesn't love anybody and nobody loves you. You've got no friends and you hate me. You hate me, and your children never love you.' He looked quite surprised for a moment or two. Then he said, 'I don't know me from somewhere.'" The play tells the audience a lot about Alice

clever; she's intuitive and well defended; she gets her own way; she sides with the underdog; she settles people, often by making a spectacle of her own state of mind—knowing her way over tables, threatening suicide, pursuing her husband into the schoolroom to berate him, as the badgered Edward tells us, sends him off the playing field, she strips off her shirt and her bra, saying, "I've made you look at last." (Even Edward dog that Alice acquires companionship and Edward separates, made to enact her outrageous wishes. "Show Jamie your new face," she says to the director. Watch this, Jamie. Edward! Die!")

Alice, of course, wants to be loved; she doesn't listen; she wants to be seen but she doesn't see. "It's not about me," Jamie says, after she recites about "his beautiful face." "Yes," she counters. "Mother knows her own mind." Her faith in the force of will in struggle engages the head but not the heart. She wants Edward to love her but she herself has taken up in a private reality, in which poetic thrills replace carnal moment. When Jamie suggests that you don't have to have a fami-

ve life, she replies, "Oh, that's just You'll grow out of that." amie, it turns out, is Nicholson's kesman, the character from whose it of view the story is told. Striking legiac note at the close of the play, ells his parents, "I had hoped to be to help you, but in the end all I do is honor you." The play drama- that filial love but also shows its re- : Edward and Alice don't honor son by keeping their argument— onfessions, the threats, the entreat- ne silences—away from him. Un- ighly, they appropriate him for their needs, weighing him down with unconscious baggage. Alternately ss, interlocutor, bulwark, spokes- emissary, and judge, Jamie is re- l by his parents to be everything s own man. "Forgive me for being hild," he says in the play's last line, ing the burden of guilt that should g to them, and thereby reinforcing attern of denial. Inevitably—and the psychological brilliance of the hich is teased out by Daniel Sul- adroit direction—the couple's cli- of retreat seeps into Jamie, who dsome, educated, and capable, litary and unable to sustain inti- elationships. He hasn't so much me as reconstructed the arid but r familial solitude in his London e parents are stalled, and, with- model of a nurturing sexual and nal relationship, so is their son. ard's awkwardness with his son ined toward the middle of the er he has finally left Alice, for the of one of his students. "My fa- s a reserved man," he tells Jamie. remember him ever embrac- " He recalls a day, soon after er died, when for a moment he he'd caught sight of him, alive, lway platform. Afterward, he e train in tears. When he told an sitting across from him in compartment why he was cry- aid, "You must want to see him y much." To a man as emotion- verished as Edward, this intu- is feelings struck him as a pro- velation. "I was astounded," felt as if I had stepped through y into another world, where itants could read my heart." nues, "It was your mother, of

course. It was Alice. . . . I made a mistake about Alice, right at the beginning, and she made a mistake about me. We thought we were like each other, and we weren't. I didn't know it." From a moment's caprice, the seeds of a lifetime's sorrow are sown.

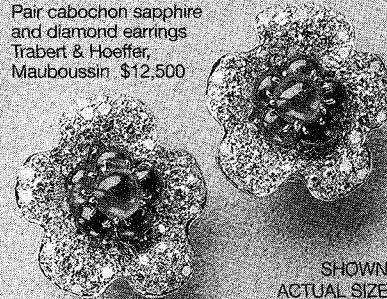
What makes this riveting, toxic landscape hard to fathom at first, for both Jamie and the audience, is the fundamental decency of the characters involved, the good manners with which provincial British life is lived. They mean well; they just don't *do* particularly well. Their doom is civilized and quiet, measured out in cups of tea and crossword puzzles and Sunday Mass. John Lee Beatty's abstract set—an elegant filigree of intertwined branches surrounding transparent walls—turns the stage, at any emotional moment, into a tangled web, a cave, a morass. Nicholson's prose, however, is not as didactic as the set. The author of "Shadowlands" and the co-author of "Gladiator," he trusts in the first principle of cinematic dramaturgy: character is action. The seductiveness of what his characters say is often belied by the irony of what they do.

At the finale, which plays, I think, as an expression of deep love and deep disturbance, Jamie moves between the figures of his mother and father, whose backs are now turned to us, as if they were figments of his imagination—as, indeed, they are. (Edward has moved away with his new family; Alice has moved forward, too. "I suppose I'll go on," she tells Jamie.) "My beloved explorers," he addresses them. "As you suffer, so I shall suffer. As you endure, so I shall endure. Forgive me for worshipping you." The speech is at once moving and chilling: idealization is what a child starts out with, not what an adult ends up with. A paean to symbiosis, Jamie's monologue is an attempt to preserve his bond with his parents and to forestall the project of adulthood, which is to separate from them. In the marvelous emotional complexity of "The Retreat from Moscow," this scene is the final shock. We are told that Napoleon took four hundred and fifty thousand men into Russia and that only twenty thousand survived; Jamie, it seems, may not be one of the survivors in the family battle. The play's last retreat belongs to him—a retreat from maturity. ♦

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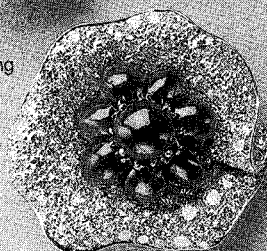
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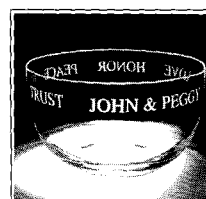
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DOUBLE OR NOTHING

Merce Cunningham goes rock.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

At the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's recent show at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the average age of Cunningham's audience seemed to have dropped by about thirty years, and that is because the troupe, normally a rather egghead enterprise, chose to perform to rock music this season. Cunningham was one of the creators of America's mid-century modernism, as, more famously, was his lifelong collaborator, John Cage, who died eleven years ago. Accordingly, the Cunningham company, for most of its history, has performed to the sort of arrhythmic, ametric, amelodic "new music" that Cage and his cohort produced: somebody making electronic static, somebody shaking beans in a jar, somebody mumbling into a mike. So when it was announced that the big new piece this season, the company's fiftieth, would be accompanied by two rock bands—Radiohead, the very hot British ensemble, and Sigur Rós, from Iceland—there was considerable head-scratching. Were Cunningham's dancers going to perform to something as normal as song? Were they going to dance to a beat? Why use rock anyway? Trevor Carlson, the company's general manager and the person whose idea this was, told the *Times* why: to bring in people previously unexposed to the company—in other words, to sell Cunningham to the young.

Among the unenlightened, it turned out, were the bands. Neither Sigur Rós nor Radiohead had ever seen Cunningham's company. (And Cunningham, who is eighty-four, didn't know who they were until Carlson told him.) Thinking that at least one band would say no, Carlson had sent both invitations at the same time. When, awkwardly, both groups said yes, each was assigned twenty

minutes of a forty-minute dance. Cunningham, who makes his dance dependently of their scores, went to the studio, and everyone else sat at home wondering what was going to happen.

What happened was that both bands, perhaps in deference to the great man, didn't rock. They stayed in the studio, and everyone else sat at home wondering what was going to happen. They didn't deliver a beat; they didn't sing. They took a bunch of sound fed them through electronic equipment just as Cage would have done. Rós's contribution began with a head's composition began with a burbling, then added a cello-like j then the voice of an evangelist some whistling and panting, all heavily cooked by the machinery. Rós's contribution was more conventionally musical, in that its main instrument was a music box, tinkling sweetly, with a great, rude gear-grinding—rewound, then tinkling again. He there were other sounds: now a man now what sounded like a dentist. For the occasion, Sigur Rós also in an instrument consisting of eight shoes mounted on a base and fitted with microphones. Occasionally, so would bang this thing with sticks. The resulting sound was unremarkable, the thought that counts. This is of a loopy idea that Cage might have had. He once miked a cactus and played it back.

Cunningham, perhaps to his new audience, opened his performance with a demonstration of his work's primary structural principle: chance. He uses chance procedures—dice-rolling, coin-flipping—to determine many things, crucial things, all of which he is working on: the order of sections it will have, the order of sections, their length, their place.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Merce Cunningham, who is celebrating his fiftieth-anniversary season, Thom Yorke, of Radiohead (left), and Jon Thor Birgisson, of Sigur Rós.



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on the stage, how many dancers they will have. The fact that the choreography and the music—the sets and the costumes, too—are created without consultation among their makers adds another layer of indeterminacy. For his golden-anniversary creation, Cunningham piled on more layers. When he found himself with two bands, he seems to have thought, What the heck, and, calling the piece “Split Sides,” he made two separate dance sections and ordered up two lighting designs, two backdrops, and two sets of costumes. Nor was any element paired with any other. Everything would be sorted, by chance, before each performance. Mathematically speaking, there were thirty-two possible combinations. The dance I saw on opening night—with, in the first half, Radiohead's score, Cunningham's Part A choreography, Robert Heishman's Japanese backdrop, James Hall's black-and-white costumes, and James Ingalls's lighting plot No. 300 (dark), and, in the second half, Sigur Rós's score, Cunningham's Part B dance, Catherine Yass's smeared-brushstrokes backdrop, Hall's colored costumes, and Ingalls's lighting plot No. 200 (brighter)—may never be performed again.

All of this is a little hard to get into one's head, and so, each night, the method was patiently demonstrated to the audience. Cunningham appeared onstage with four of his company's eminences: Carolyn Brown, his magisterial dance partner from the fifties and sixties; Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, his longtime artistic collaborators; and Sage Cowles, his troupe's primary patron. Apologetically, he explained that the order of the two dance sections had been determined the day before, so that the dancers could rehearse properly. But the sequencing of the remaining elements would be worked out now. Carolyn Brown stepped forward with a die, to decide the order of the bands. Evens, Cunningham declared, would put Radiohead first; odds, Sigur Rós. As we watched her hands on a video screen, Brown rolled the die and got a four: Radiohead would go first. And so on, down the line, with the others throwing the die to determine the order of the sets, the costume designs, the lighting plots.

This was fun, and though Cunningham has been rolling dice—and telling us he was doing so—for fifty-odd years,

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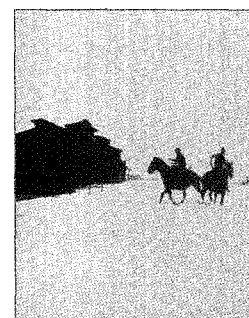
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is still shocking, for it explodes the
 iples of order that we think of as
 al to art. Would it be O.K. if the
 to Joy" came in the middle of Bee-
 en's Ninth Symphony rather than at
 nd? Would it be all right if one of
 on Pollock's drip paintings were re-
 iced in reverse?

was at Cage's suggestion that Cun-
 am began using chance. Cunning-
 colleague Paul Taylor has written
 ie choreographer told him it started
 anxiety-management technique:
 he got blocked, he'd roll the dice,
 st do what they said. Not everyone
 this was a good bargain. Witness
 ent interview between Cunning-
 and the art critic Deborah Solomon
Times Magazine:

: There's already so much chaos in
 1 turn to art to escape it.
 .: Chance becomes its own order, if
 ose to use it. Instead of planning a
 order, you use chance, and out of it
 ie a new kind of order.
 But it would probably be an inferior
 nonorder.
 .: Exactly. So that it opens your imag-
 Chaos is chaos only if you think it

That's incorrect. Some situations are
 y chaotic.

ally, Cunningham's work never
 aotic, but the rule of chance does
 oter, probably unintended result.
 s the dances look alike. A pat-
 square, a circle—strikes the eye,
 be remembered, because it cor-
 s to a model in our minds. But
 nce constructions, though they
 very different, tend to look alike,
 we have no mental analogue for
 lost people, when they recall a
 ham dance, probably remem-
 ts set or its costumes, or perhaps
 anchancy section, maybe a part
 dancers were made to look like
 dolls—in other words, where
 am, for once, imposed a famil-
 i. Parts A and B of "Split Sides"
 osed to be different dances, and
 , sort of. In Part A, there was a
 of unsupported adagio, where
 rs have to stand on one leg and
 slow, beautiful steps, preferably
 Unsupported adagio is proba-
 dest thing a dancer ever has to
 Part A had an undercurrent of
 a Part B, the movement was
 pping, running—and there-
 er. But I wouldn't remember

the difference between the two sections
 if I didn't have notes.

This doesn't bother me. Or, I see it
 as the price Cunningham pays for the
 achievement of a certain sort of bliss.
 Reading his Zen utterances to Deborah
 Solomon—"Chance becomes its own
 order"—you may think, Give me a break.
 But what he says here actually comes true
 on his stage. Many people have pointed
 out that Cunningham's work looks like
 nature, and it does. It has the same sur-
 prise within regularity, pathos within
 amorality. In Part A of "Split Sides," there
 is a duet for Daniel Squire and the excel-
 lent Holley Farmer. He tips her so far
 forward that her chin practically hits the
 floor—a perilous maneuver. She seems to
 like it, though, because once she stands
 up again she immediately falls back-
 ward, head first, trusting Squire to catch
 her, which he does. This is an intimate
 scene—a love scene, really. You can't have
 people saving each other from physical
 danger without communicating some
 kind of love. But what kind are we look-
 ing at here? Carmen and Don José? Fred
 and Ginger? Cunningham never tells us,
 never fills in the blanks. That is what
 some people think of as his coldness. I
 would call it his freedom from cant.

Audiences probably watch Cunning-
 ham's work differently from the way they
 watch other kinds of dancing. Because
 they know there's no regular story being
 told, nothing they have to keep track of,
 they can let their minds wander now and
 then. But, when they are paying atten-
 tion, I think it is an especially keen at-
 tention, again because of the unfilled-in
 story. Why does Farmer keep falling?
 Why does Squire carry her out in that
 elaborate, bent-legged pose, as if she
 were running in the air? Such actions
 press on the mind, and if the mind can't
 answer they may press it harder.

You can find dancing that is more
 poignant, or easier to watch, than Cun-
 ingham's, but I don't think any chore-
 ographer in the world gives us a closer
 look at the truth. Beauty without rea-
 sons, and without anxiety over the lack of
 reasons: that may be what life was like be-
 fore we started making it up. Sometimes,
 when I look at Cunningham's stage, I
 think I'm seeing the world on the sev-
 enth day, with everything new and just
 itself—before the snake, and the tears,
 and the explanations. ♦

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MUSICAL EVENTS

ESCAPING THE MUSEUM

Passion, not reverence, makes early music come alive.

BY ALEX ROSS

Musicians who specialize in performing works of the deep past, from the Baroque, the Renaissance, or before, eventually have to face up to the impossibility of their task. The philosopher Lydia Goehr, in her book "The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works," shows that the concept of a "work"—an infallible score to be scrupulously realized in performance—did not exist until the Romantic period. Before then, scores were less like papal writs than like cooking recipes, leaving crucial details up to the taste of the performers. Singers would adorn their lines according to their abilities and whims. Instrumentalists would fill out their parts with ornaments and other sonic curlicues. Composers often doubled as virtuosos, throwing out ideas in off-the-cuff improvisations. In this repertory, the modern ideal of the note-perfect performance, so prized in conservatories, automatically produces an inauthentic result. Play only the right notes, and you play them wrong.

If you really wanted to re-create the musical culture of Bach's time, you would have to stop playing Bach altogether and concentrate on contemporary composers. Before 1800, there was no great reverence toward the musical past, and even a living giant such as Bach had approximately the glamour of a TV weatherman. The historian Tanya Kevorkian suggests that Bach's cantatas were received with something less than universal devotion; while some members of the congregation followed closely, others chatted, milled about, or went out for a smoke. "Mein Gott, here goes Bach with his tortured counterpoint," the typical burgher might have said. Centuries on, a work such as "Ich habe genug" causes audiences to fall silent with awe. Lorraine Hunt Lieberson's new recording of the cantata, on Nonesuch, is beautiful enough to stop a war, if anyone thought to try. Were Baroque listen-

ers uncultured idiots? Or did they have a healthier attitude toward music's place in society? At about the time audiences began treating composers like gods, it would seem, the truly godlike composer began to disappear.

The most authentic performance is the most alive performance. I can't follow John Eliot Gardiner's meticulous instructions of the "St. Matthew Passion" over Otto Klemperer's Brucknerian ovation; the latter has too much beauty to be dismissed. It's not what Bach had in mind, but you can't fault him saying, as Stravinsky said when he heard Bernstein's over-the-top "Spring": "Wow!" Still, there is no beauty to be gained by studying the past, only a better chance of staying alive if the performer uses an appropriate instrument and knows some of the oral tradition that went along with the score. The luckiest when we get a performance learned and fervid; and it was a lucky crowd that came to the Frick Collection earlier this month to hear oboist Andrew Manze.

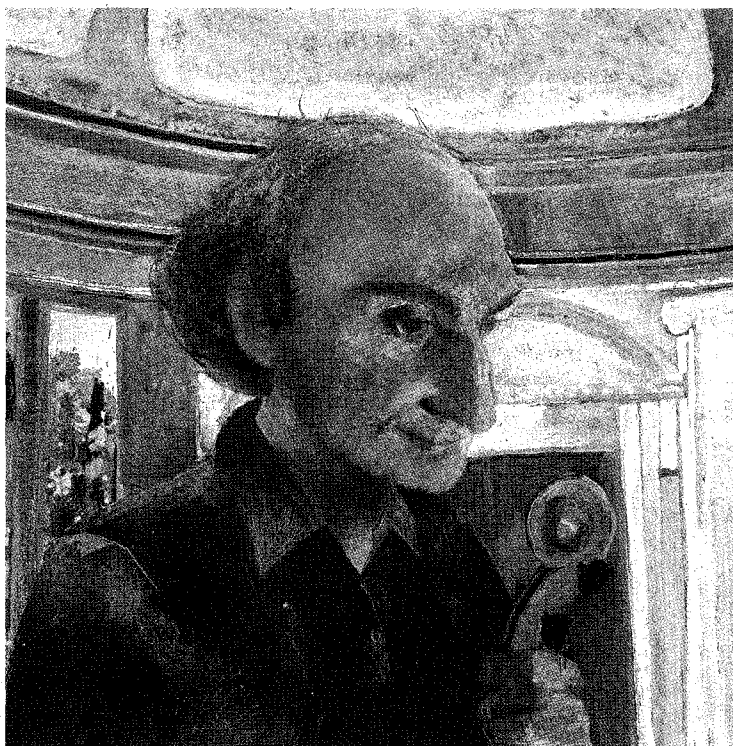
Manze is a balding, bespectacled Englishman of deceptively professorial appearance. He made his name with a series of recordings for the Harmonia Mundi label. The latest, a lightful all-Mozart disk, in which he manages to give some backbone to the dinner-party anthem "Ein Nachtmusik." Manze is much more commanding as a conductor, but at the Frick he showed up with only his 1788 Gagliano violin, playing solo Bach, Tartini, and Telemann. He commands an astonishing variety of sound, from eerie whisperings to guttural tizzos, from pure-toned lyrical to gritty attack one or two steps removed from bluegrass fiddling. A kind of action musicologist, he is able to channel these sounds into a cogent

playing is at once spontaneously intuitive and magisterially controlled. First came Manze's own arrangement of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in minor. In some comments before—the violinist likes to preface his romances with wry, donnish lectures—which makes his flair for the dramatic all the more arresting—he alludes to musicological speculation that this most sacred of organ works must have been originally composed for violin (perhaps by Bach, perhaps by someone else). If it wasn't, Manze would have been within bounds, as a headstrong virtuoso, to make appropriation. In this, the opening unit—which create the Halloween melody on the organ, besilvered tendrils of spreading out like in ice. A musicological puzzle was temporarily solved: the Toccata and Fugue emerged as a new composition by Andrew Manze. His Second Partita in minor is most defini-

tive of Bach; Manze plays from a copy of the composer's manuscript. Bach's late handwriting, Manze deciphers "very little guesswork" for the former. Following along in the score, Manze wasn't so sure. Bach gives no tempo indications, very few dynamics, little about style of execution. Manze had to flesh all this out, as drawing on performance tradition and sometimes applying his own judgment. He accepts Helga Thoene's theory that the partita, with its monumental scale, is a memorial for Bach's first wife, Barbara. In a performance giving intensity, Manze transfigures the partita into a five-act monodrama, in which the turn toward grief, halfway through sounded like a temptation to smile through tears (he stopped chords came haltingly-effortfully) and the last statement of the theme became an X-ray of a vacant heart. I've never heard

the music played with such raw feeling.

The Frick's music room was the perfect space for Manze's intimate assault. Seating a hundred and seventy-five, it resembles the sorts of rooms for which Bach wrote. The concert series at the Frick remains one of the best deals in New York: tickets are free, Joyce Bodig's programming regularly buses in brilliant



Andrew Manze knows his musicology but plays like a headstrong virtuoso.

new talents, and something about the space guarantees a joy of connection. The trick is in figuring out the cloak-and-dagger ticketing system. Details can be found on the Frick's Web site, although a high-speed connection will get you only so far. Requests must arrive by regular mail on the third Monday before each concert, preferably with a duodenal seal attached.

A week after Manze visited the Frick, the Pomerium vocal ensemble gave a concert of fourteenth-century music at Cooper Union, in the East Village. Like the Frick, Cooper Union is routinely lit up by lively programs, which are in need of support. Pomerium's program centered on songs and sacred pieces of Guillaume de Machaut, one of the first composers in history to have put an unmistakable personal stamp on their music. He wrote partly in the wake of the Black Death, and his music is al-

most deliriously inventive, as if he were trying to forget the world around him by making a new one on paper.

Alexander Blachly, the leader of Pomerium, has been involved with early music for decades, and his thinking has evolved and matured along with the rest of the movement. He told me in a phone conversation that back in the

sixties early-music specialists were obsessed with the ideal of "staying true to the work"; performances were correct, chilly, studiously inexpressive. "It all came out sounding like Hindemith training exercises," he confessed. Now Blachly aims for a more elastic approach, for more shapely and sensuous phrasing. His current ensemble—on this evening, four women and seven men, with high voices dominating—easily meets his demands. Plain lyric strains gave a human touch to even the most ornate, mathematical designs; vibrato-free, church-choir tones alternated with a more red-blooded, vernacular style. The singers deliv-

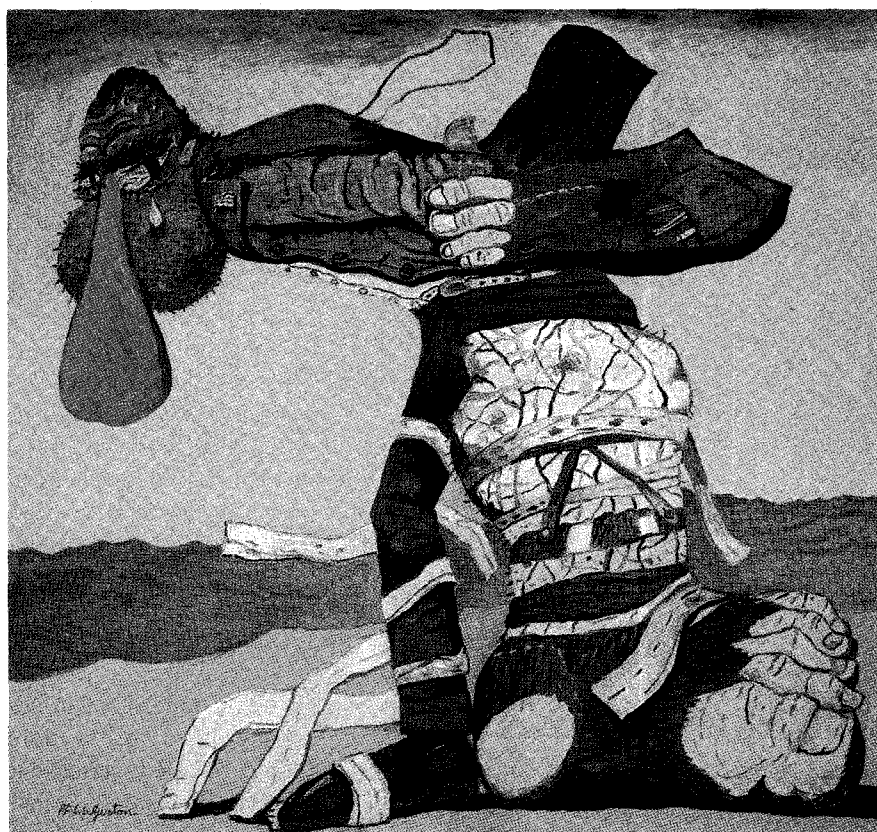
ered Machaut's great "Notre Dame Mass" with the same ardor that they applied to secular, love-drenched pieces such as "Dis et sept, cinq," "Je sui aussi," and "Quant Theseus."

As I listened, I got a sense of Machaut as a familiar intellectual type—the self-imprisoned man who hides his passion behind a panoply of masks. He wrote reams of poetry and music in praise of a young noblewoman named Peronelle d'Armentières, whom he seems to have romanced in his sixties. Peronelle, having thrown herself at Machaut out of adoration for his art, soon abandoned him for a man closer to her age and station. Somehow it's all too perfectly awful to be true. Like Beethoven in his "Immortal Beloved" period, like the Thomas Mann of "Death in Venice," Machaut may have locked his highest passion in a region of his mind. Performers must not only follow the notes but set the emotion free. ♦

THE JUNKMAN'S SON

A Philip Guston retrospective.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



"San Clemente" (1975). Late Guston is one of its era's explosive cultural departures.

Around 1967, Philip Guston abandoned the tremblingly sensitive, lofty Abstract Expressionism for which he was revered. In its place came an outburst of gross cartoon imagery: gregarious Ku Klux Klansmen with fat cigars; one-eyed heads, like lima beans, in need of a shave; interiors ajumble with liquor bottles, cigarettes, food, and painting gear. Guston, who died of a heart attack in 1980, at the age of sixty-six, had seemed the most compunctious member of American art's greatest generation. Intimations of figures sometimes haunted his abstractions, only to be visibly suppressed—he was a knight of emotional restraint. When his new work was shown in bulk at the Marlborough Gallery, in 1970, it was as though an elegant veil had parted and out had stepped a yacking geek. I was one of many people

who hated the show, and I found myself half-agreeing with the headline of a famous pan by Hilton Kramer, in the *Times*: "A MANDARIN PRETENDING TO BE A STUMBLEBUM." "Mandarin" seemed wrong; a better analogy, for me, would have been mountain-dwelling scholar-poet. But the rest fit the masochistic bearing of a style that felt all the more grotesque for being executed with the artist's insinuating brushwork and ticklish color.

That moment retains its shock in the current Guston retrospective at the Metropolitan. (The show began last spring at the Fort Worth Modern Art Museum.) Reliving it, I understand both why it took me more than a decade to come around to late Guston and why I now regard that work as the most important American painting of its time.

The reason in each case is a traumatic upheaval of the nineteen-sixties. Guston belongs among other explosively harshly significant cultural departures of the era. Bob Dylan, plugging in an electric guitar at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965, also abruptly trashed a precious taste with which he had been identified. It seems appropriate that Guston lived in Woodstock, New York, where he had moved in 1947. His breakthrough work in 1967 even seemed to echo the "underground" comic-book stylings of the day, notably R. Crumb, though even then he was unaware of them at first; resemblance points to shared influence. Both Guston and Crumb took inspiration from such classic comic books as George Herriman's "Krazy Kat." Guston loved rock-and-roll Dylan, but I suspect he had more faith in high-toned abstraction as the pinnacle of contemporary art. Guston's 1970 show—in retrospect, his painting's Appomattox—left me feeling betrayed.

Guston was born Philip Guston to Russian Jewish immigrants in Montreal in 1913; he was the youngest of seven children. The family moved to Los Angeles seven years later. Philip obsessively, often holed up in his room with a bare light bulb. (That bulb motif in his late work.) When ten or eleven years old, he found the dead body of his father, Louis, a blacksmith who had been reduced to a junkman. Louis had hanged himself. Jackson Pollock was Guston's closest friend in high school. Both were leftists, the two were expelled from school for leafletting against the school's emphasis on sports. Pollock left New York in 1930, while Guston remained in California, profiting from friendship with cultivated older artists and art dealers. He acquired his lifelong love for Old Masters—Piero della Francesca was a god to him—and embraced Depression-era fashion of Social Realism. His fascination with the Klan began early. In a drawing made at the age of seventeen, a man in a group that has lynched a man fingers a rope with apprehension. Guston said of the Klans in his late work, "What would I like to be evil? To plan, to plot. The harrowing touch of 'Heart of Darkness'—upriver, where the bears

is aspect of Guston's imagination. After working on murals in Mexico, under the aegis of David Alfaro Siqueiros, Guston moved to New York and stayed with Pollock, and joined the division of the Works Progress Administration. He married Musa McCann, an artist and poet and his inseparable companion for the rest of his life. Coming back from the trend toward abstraction in the work of Pollock and his friends, including Mark Rothko. In 1961, he left New York for Iowa City, where he taught for six years. As late as 1945, he was painting politically tinged, Surrealistic vein. "Is Be Not I" is an enigmatic allegory of slum children costumed in the style of a Venetian carnival; the picture is notable mainly for soft blues, dirty reds and other uncannily sentient colors. Finally went abstract in the early 1970s with a mode that art-world wits have dubbed "Abstract Impressionism"—lifting masses of short, worried brushstrokes in delicately abrasive, glowing colors. During the next decade and a half, his style became more dramatic, with dominant reds and blacks, broader brushstrokes, and jostling forms like possibly figures astir in shadows. Guston's Kooning-like knack for making contours that are pregnant with meaning while describing nothing themselves. No one has ever had a more charismatic touch. (The plangent strokes that Jasper Johns wielded bravely in his flags and targets are a sequel.) "To Fellini" (1958), a self-abstraction evocative of carnival fears, strikes me as a supreme painterly achievement—existential-sublimity. In the 1980s, something is brewing in the manner of the early and mid-century: masklike black forms hover over a landscape of pewter grays, ardent blues, and the occasional, blaring red. Increasingly self-aware drawings tend to have the stuttering air of raspberries that are just out of focus. When, boom. All hell doesn't so much break loose as move in and set itself on fire. Klansmen in what might be surgically sutured hoods flagellate themselves, take spins around toon cars, engage in bang-bang-dead finger-shooting, and end up as themselves. Abject old

shoes, some at the ends of bodiless legs, pile up like the debris of obscure atrocities. Belligerent arms brandish garbage-can lids. A bean-head may lie face down on the ground, contemplate empty bottles and other tokens of bad habits, or direct a thousand-yard stare at nothing. An oddly insistent horseshoe shape recurs: the Greek omega. Drowning deluges of water rise. Hilarious, weirdly compassionate caricatures of Richard Nixon, with a colossal phlebotic leg, occupied Guston for a while. The manner of drawing in the late work is beyond coarse; it flaunts ham-fisted arbitrariness. (Crumb is Ingres by comparison.) But everywhere, realizing boundless varieties of wonder, there is that buttery, tender, wonderful stroke, and those colors like materialized day and night and pared flesh.

Late Guston scared me. Thrashing about in my personal share of the time's chaos, I had thrilled to a promise, in his painting, of inviolable aesthetic elevation. Plausible father figures were scarce in the sixties; here was a cherished one running amok. (In a fine, sorrowful memoir by his daughter Musa Mayer, "Night Studio," which was published in 1988, Guston emerges as a warm but relentlessly self-absorbed dad. Once, in her early childhood, she writes, "Philip spent hours making a cookie for me, cutting up currants, marking the reins and halter of a beautiful Greek horse. . . . When I saw it, I cried, 'Oooh, my cookie,' and reached for it." But it was taken away and mounted on the wall, as art.) Now I recognize as heroic Guston's surrender of a lifelong yearning for august refinement, which was always strained and tinged with falseness, coming from a tragic junkman's son. Guston felt guilty, in later life, for having changed his name, in 1937—for denying what he was. "I got sick and tired of all that purity!" he said. His cartoon personae were thus the opposite of self-invention. In their disorder, he found peace. For young artists who were less interested in spiritual reassurance than in how to make the beleaguered art of painting newly credible—in varying degrees, most of the important painters of the past thirty years—he became a father figure indeed. His example renews a timeless truth about creativity: the royal road to the heights leads down. ♦

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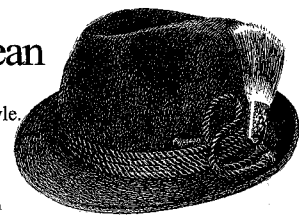


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DECEIVED

"Shattered Glass" and "The Human Stain."

BY ANTHONY LANE

The new movie "Shattered Glass" depicts a nasty moment in the life of *The New Republic*. If the internal turmoils of a political magazine based in Washington are now considered sufficient grounds for a motion picture, there is no saying where the movie industry, avid for fresh material, will choose to cast its net: A struggle for the soul of *Men's Health*? A major dustup over late-bottled port in the pages of *De-canter*? Journalists everywhere will be emboldened to inspect their wrinkled lives for possible drama. For instance, that cab ride to J.F.K. that I claimed on expenses last year: would Vin Diesel care to hear more?

The man who, in the late nineteen-nineties, brought disgrace upon *The New Republic* was Stephen Glass, although to call him a man suggests that he was fully formed. As portrayed in the film by Hayden Christensen, he is scarcely more than a boy: geeky, glib, and blessed (or, as we come to realize, burdened) with the headlong momentum of boyhood—that eagerness with which the smart kid will both lunge into trouble and try to oil himself out of it. Christensen has tasted fame as Anakin Skywalker in the recent installments of "Star Wars," but any fears that he would import an aura of proto-Jedi wisdom to this new role are, thankfully, unfounded, and somebody in the makeup department remembered to lop off that annoying intergalactic rattail at the back of his head. Instead, Christensen sports a slightly oversized pair of spectacles, retreating behind them as if they were mirrors, or translucent walls; they are a perfect play on his name, far subtler than the elephantine pun of the movie's title.

This youthfulness lends a kick to the plot. Given that we find it hard to imagine young Glass needing to shave, or daring to have sex with anybody other than himself, we—in common with the rest of the characters—would

consider him incapable of sin, still less of substantial deceit. Suspicions are raised at once, however, by Glass's opening voice-over. "If you're a little bit humble, a little self-effacing or solicitous, you stand out," he says, thus placing an instant bid to become the Uriah Heep of his generation. By the time Glass was fired from the magazine, in 1998,



Hayden Christensen as the errant journalist Stephen Glass.

he had invented, inflated, or otherwise fooled around with the facts in twenty-seven of his forty-one published articles. The movie, written and directed by Billy Ray, concentrates on the unmasking of the master criminal as he is quizzed first by one editor, Michael Kelly, and then, more thoroughly, by his successor, Chuck Lane.

A lavish and funky cast has been assembled to tell the tale. No film that stars Chloë Sevigny as a reporter can be accused of shirking its cinematic responsibilities. Lane is played by Peter Sarsgaard and Kelly by Hank Azaria. Steve Zahn and Rosario Dawson make a tasty double act as a couple of reporters on *Forbes Digital Tool*, the unfortunately titled and—as a possible

consequence—now defunct onlineazine that first rumbles the errant (In a piece about a teen-age hack is found to have summoned source of thin air and then attempted to his fabrications by forging Web and business cards.) His downlaced with dread, and, as a whole, "Shattered Glass" is carefully constructed, played, and shot with calm. It is also, by a considerable margin, the most ridiculous movie seen this year.

The problem is simple: what, the big deal? Stephen Glass was, on the make, a species common to fields of human endeavor, yet, to by the solemnity with which this treats his story, the importance

transgressions puts him somewhere between Ted Bundy and Al. Some viewers may complain that "Shattered Glass" glamorizes his crime but that is not so; Glass is as rich as schmuck at the close of the picture was at the start. More worry about the moral glamour with which his profession is invested. At the end he is introduced to an adoring journalism students. Whether a recorded event or a typical Glassy I am not quite sure, but he proceeds to treat his pronouncement "Journalism is just the art of behavior"—without a glint. Glass may be a rotten apple, but the contention of is that the barrel itself, the ne-

reporter, is as sturdy and as polished as ever.

Give me a break. On second thought, give me "His Girl Friday." Five minutes with Hawks's speedy and cynical hacks in sharp suits, as they lives bend the world to fit the of their own cynicism, is a more sight than ninety-four minutes when Glass and his tragic slide race. Where is the fallout in this Nobody suffers; nobody dies. "I was sorry," Glass declares, as he usually shown the door. "I know," he replies, "but you have to go." What of these guys? They sound like Neal and Ali MacGraw at the "Love Story," and the plangent which "Shattered Glass" enfolds is leave-taking is, on the scale of assessments, second only to the raucous round of applause into which staff members explode as they chuck Lane's expulsion of the editor and the consequent restoration of spiritual purity to the magazine. The productions of "Parsifal" that is of a fuss.

Of course, now is an ideal time to reassess engrossingly wrongheaded as a feast for those of us who are damnedest to treat the saga of Blair, and his tribulations at the end, with the ethical nicety that he early deserved, but who came to the instant conclusion that all they had for, in the end, was a laugh. In denying the extent to which, in the confines of the trade, Glass screwed up; if they had wanted to be in fiction, they should have written novels or, more lucra-

tively, shipped over to England and worked for one of the tabloids, where the embellishing instinct is de rigueur. If, however, you expend all your wrath and lamentation on dodgy reporting, what on earth have you got left over for actual malevolence—for the strains of harm and negligence that genuinely corrode our lives? The closing credits of the movie remind us that Stephen Glass's editor Michael Kelly was killed while working in Iraq in 2003. Now, that is a story, and it makes the rest of "Shattered Glass" look smaller than ever.

The task of filming Philip Roth's fiction is not an enviable one. The rasp and ring of the author's voice are so insistent, so confidently ravenous for the reader's attention, that the temptation simply to carve out chunks of prose and dump them into the screenplay must be almost too much to bear. The dilemma is acute with a novel like "The Human Stain," which has now been filmed by Robert Benton, and in which a number of intensely loaded incidents touch off long, intemperate broadsides of speech.

Coleman Silk is the singular figure around whom the narrative spins. He is, to all appearances, a Jewish professor of classics at Athena College, although the driving conceit of both book and film is that appearances deceive. In fact, he is the son of black parents, but his paleness of skin led him to deny his origins and cross over to the white side of life. There is plenty of historical backup for this shift, yet even on the page it required a delicate suspension of disbelief, and, once it arrives onscreen, you don't quite

know where to look. For Silk is played by Anthony Hopkins, and so we are offered the unique spectacle of a Welshman playing a black American playing a white American Jew. Moreover, Silk's earlier self—much of the film flashes back to his youth, in wartime—is played by Wentworth Miller, a strong young actor who looks (a) tremulously handsome and (b) nothing whatsoever like Anthony Hopkins.

This would not matter if the movie were fired up; any moviegoer, if excited enough, is prepared to let credibility go hang. But Benton is a quietist among directors—this wintry new film is a companion piece to his equally snow-muffled "Nobody's Fool"—and he instinctively seeks to wring elegance from the raucous Roth. (Listen to the wistful piano and strings in the movie's score, composed by Rachel Portman, and you find yourself longing for Stravinsky or Shostakovich—something as tough and percussive as the prose.) The casting is left perilously exposed, and, just as we are struggling with Hopkins, along comes Nicole Kidman—whose willowy hauteur is the crux of her appeal—as the supposedly rough and bedraggled Faunia Farley, who toils as a cow milker and a college janitor, and who takes Silk into her bed. It would be unreasonable, I guess, to expect the thunderous climate overhanging the novel—which curses at political correctness and the Monica Lewinsky scandal—to survive on film, but all we are left with, in essence, is an unlikely love affair, performed by two actors so remorselessly skilled that, by the end, you can't see the love for the skill. ♦

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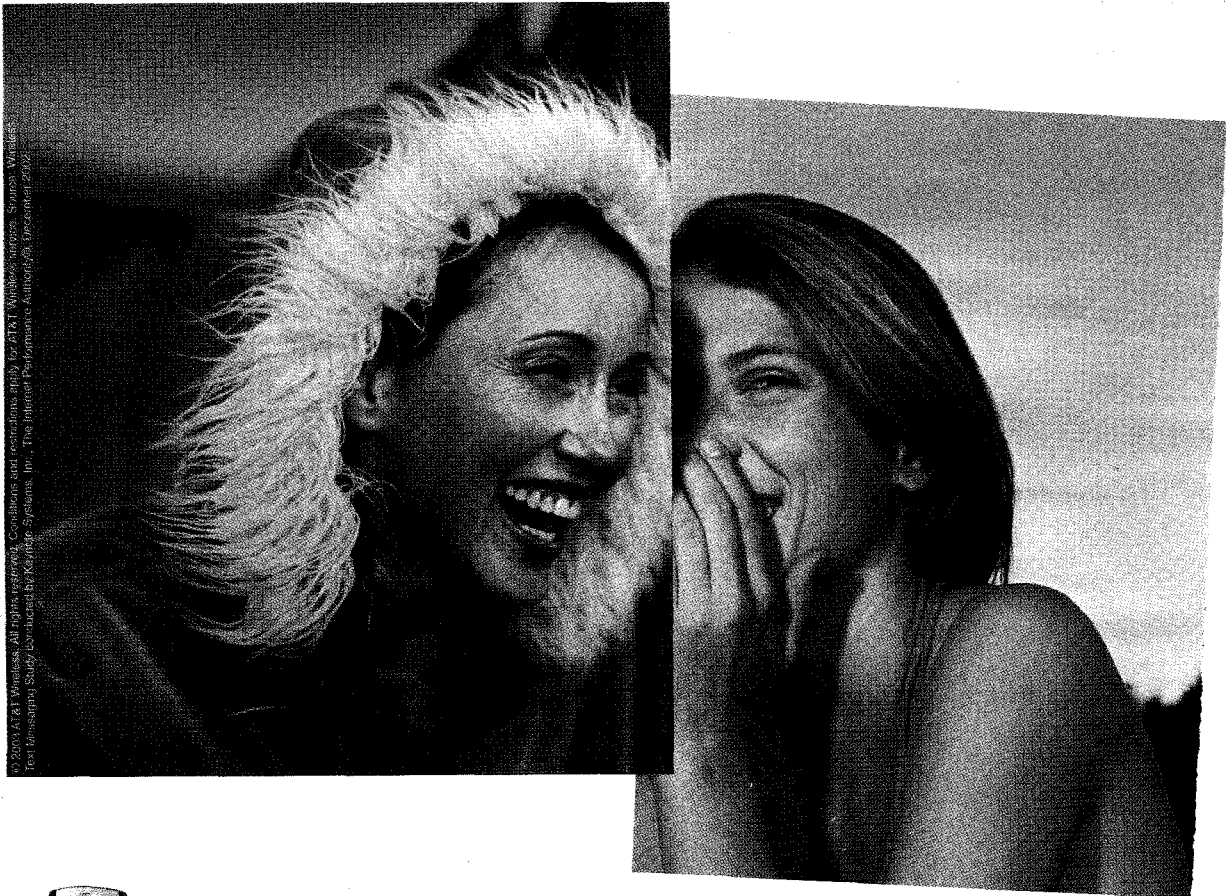
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